



Discernment

SO THAT YOU MAY BE ABLE TO DISCERN WHAT IS BEST. *PHIL. 1:10*

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Discernment aims to stimulate interest in the moral dimensions of contemporary issues; to provide a forum for Christian reflection; and to foster the teaching of Christian ethics across the curriculum. Published three times a year.

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Valuing Families and Family Values

Everybody is discussing family values today, but few people use the term in the same way. On the day after this year's Rose Bowl (which for all Chicagoans is now a landmark date, even with USC's win), I was roaming through the Field Museum of Natural History on Chicago's lakefront, enjoying the riches of museum knowledge and steadying myself for the start of the spring semester. On the second level of that wonderful place is a display area called "Families at Work." The museum tour map describes it this way: "See how different animal and human families rear their young." It's an innocent description for nearly every visitor; perhaps only one in a thousand will take to worrying about it.

The question roaming around my head as I roamed the display was whether scientists and historians can distinguish, in this sophisticated era, any difference between animals (I'm using the popular definition here, the little four-legged beasts who live in the forest) and humans. Or, as I was coming to suspect, the dividing line between them and us is pretty murky and scientifically uninteresting. So when we want to understand something like "family life," we make no distinctions at all.

Natural historians may be forced to a "strong continuity" position by virtue of the intellectual assumptions which currently undergird their work. But ethicists are not so bound, as the material in this issue of *Discernment* will make abundantly clear. As the "image of God" is a term which gives theologians reason to mark the distinction clearly, so "morality" is the term by which ethicists see a difference. Our task at CACE is to explore applied Christian ethics, so you can imagine that we are doubly worried about blurred lines, and doubly intense on clarifying what "family values" is all about. Our CACE theme for this year is devoted to that task, and the articles offered here certainly communicate the intensity of the debate. As always, we welcome your replies and comments, and certainly your participation in any of our local programs. ■

"In the family of the just man who lives by faith... even those who rule serve those who they seem to command; for they rule not from a love of power, but from a sense of duty they owe to others—not because they are proud of authority, but because they love mercy."

—Augustine

Mark Fackler

What the Bible Says About Gender Roles: A Debate

Last fall at Wheaton College, the David A. Penner debate featured Dr. John Piper, pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, and a strong advocate of male leadership in family and church, opposed by Dr. Ruth Tucker of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, a spokesperson on behalf of women's roles in church, workplace, and home. Pierce Chapel at the college was packed with students, faculty, and community guests as the debate began — moderated by associate professor of psychology Cynthia Neal.

Cynthia Neal: The church today is confused about God's view of the family. Is there a traditional family that's based on Scriptural norms? Or is "traditional family" a development of the Industrial Revolution? Does God have a prescriptive role for families to fulfill? And particularly, is there a prescriptive role for men and women, husbands and wives?

John Piper: My own personal mission statement is to spread a passion for the supremacy of God in all things, for the joy of all peoples. The family exists by the creation and design of God. First and primarily, the task of evangelicals is to proclaim that the main thing at stake in the family is the knowledge and the worship of God in Christ, and to warn the world, with tears and prayer, against the suicidal flight from reality that ignores and minimizes the most important aspect of every problem and issue today—namely, God.

God does not like being taken for granted. The very reason for creation is God's going public for the glory of God. All things, including the family, are from Him, and through Him, and to Him belongs glory in the family and in all reality.

I have ten propositions that I want to make, starting with the least controversial.

Proposition one: The family is not God, and all the satisfaction that we feel in its potential is potential idolatry. All the satisfaction that we get from wife and children, husband and children, is potential idolatry and a threat to worship, as are all other pleasures that are not in God.

Proposition two: The family is the first place, the last place, and the greatest place of pain and futility in human life, and thus the family is the first and primary place for learning the price of forsaking and neglecting God. The first misery that

entered the world after the alienation from God in the Garden was delinquency and shame and heartlessness between husband and wife. Every human life is the burden and the fruit of an imperfect family, without exception. The last enemy, death, leaves its greatest wounds in grieving families, not strangers. No one can hurt so deeply and hate so bitterly as those who have loved and have been loved.

Proposition three: In a fallen world, God ordains parents to rescue children from folly and to reveal the holiness of God. God compares His pain and the pain of parenting in Hebrews 12. So, parenting is meant to provide a safe and loving place for children to experience the pain of folly and the peace of righteousness and to learn how they will be loved by God in that way.

Proposition four: God commands parents, especially fathers, to take primary responsibility for building biblical truth into the lives of their children with a view to preserving confidence in God for all generations.

Proposition five: In a fallen and perishing world, the harmony and cohesiveness of human families are subordinate to the redemptive purposes of God in Christ

Proposition six: While it is good for men not to be alone, it is worse to be married when called and gifted to be single for the Lord's sake. The ideal aim of marriage in the created order is subordinate to the demands of devotion to Christ.

Proposition seven: Marriage is the one and only sacred haven for sexual union, and this union is God's ministry of protection from Satan's temptation for husbands and wives. It is immoral to have sexual relations outside marriage. Sexual intercourse is one of the first and foremost weapons of spiritual warfare.

Proposition eight: Marriage is designed by God from the beginning as a model and manifestation of the relationship intended between Christ and the Church. The most essential meaning of marriage is its divine purpose to portray the dynamic of love between Christ and the Church. Therefore, I affirm the meaning of marriage articulated in Genesis 2:24 — to manifest Christ and the Church in covenant union.

Proposition nine: The marriage portrayal of covenant union between Christ and the Church is clearest when the husband patterns his unique role of headship after the loving Christ, and when the wife patterns her unique role of submission after the responsive Church. In the dramatic portrayal of Christ and the Church in marriage, husbands should



John Piper, author and pastor

take their unique cues from the work of Christ, and wives should take their unique cues from the calling of the Church.

Finally, proposition ten: The mutual submission of Ephesians 5:20 exercised by Christ and the Church is not the same. Christ submits by sacrificial loving, leadership, provision, and protection. The Church submits by affirming Christ's unique role, responding to it with joy, and joining with Christ to carry through His world mission. Thus, I interpret biblical headship like this: Headship for the husband, patterned after Christ, is the divine calling to take primary responsibility for Christlike, servant leadership, protection, and provision in the home. Biblical submission for the wife, patterned after the Church, is the divine calling to honor and to affirm her husband's leadership and help to carry it through according to her gifts. The mutuality of love, humility, service, and sacrifice that drives this drama does not nullify this distinction.

God has designed human beings to magnify His glory in covenant union of joy with Christ. In a similar way, God has designed the deepest satisfactions of marriage to come through a drama that reflects that higher union and that greater joy. If we yield today to the gender-leveling, sex-blind tendencies of contemporary culture, the biblical drama of marriage will cease, and its purpose to display the union of Christ and His Church will be darkened. Since my mission here is to spread a passion for the supremacy of God in all things for the joy of all people, I commend to you this complementary view of marriage and family rather than an egalitarian one.

Ruth Tucker: Should marriage be based on a model of mutual submission and equality or a model of male headship? I will deal with the topic by asking and answering ten sub-questions.

Number one: Does mutual submission and equality mean gender-sameness? Ray Ortland writes, "I see this fallacy again and again in feminist argumentation that equality equals indistinguishability." I celebrate gender differences of men and women, and I shun the ideal of gender sameness.

Two: Does mutual submission and equality mean cultural uniformity? No, but unfortunately this issue is often taken out of its cultural context. Too often, we are narrowed by our own little corner of the world, and our response fails to consider other cultures. Those who would argue against mutual submission often do so in a way that does not account for cultural differences.

Three: Does mutual submission in marriage mean the mother works full-time? Certainly not. Children need close parental

supervision, and the mother, in most instances, finds it natural and normal to fulfill the primary child-care role. Whatever the arrangement, it is essential to make child care a top priority.

Four: Does mutual submission and equality result in "more divorce, more homosexuality, more sexual abuse, more promiscuity, more social awkwardness, more emotional distress and suicide," as Dr. Piper suggests in the first chapter of his edited work? There is no documented evidence supporting these charges.

Five: Does mutual submission threaten the husband's role? Not unless the man is insecure. Many men testify that equality in marriage relieves the stress and pressure of sole decision-making and allows the wife to grow and serve as a full partner in all respects of the relationship.

Six: Does a model of mutual submission and equal partnership strengthen a marriage spiritually? Yes, it certainly has that potential. We all go through periods of drought and difficulties, and when one partner is weak or troubled, the other can help with strong faith.

Seven: What does a marriage based on mutual submission and equality look like in practical terms? It means equal partnership between the husband and wife. I know from personal experience that dual leadership works. I have coauthored two books, and in neither case was there a head. We had many differences, but we were forced

to hammer out tough issues and compromise, and we had better books as a result. The same can be true of marriage.

Eight: Is a model of mutual submission the only way to truly affirm equality in marriage? Yes. However, the issue is often confused by terminology. In recent years, those who hold a traditional view of male-female relationships have begun using the term complementary, insisting that they fully affirm equality of males and females, but argue that their roles are complementary. Women and men

are not the same, but if we deny equal opportunity to women, we should not use the word equality in defining our position. If all women are to be under the headship of men, neither should we consider this equality.



Ruth Tucker, seminary professor

"Every effort to make society sensitive to the importance of the family is a great service to humanity."

—Pope John Paul II

Nine: Is the model of mutual submission and equality in marriage affirmed in scripture? Yes. As Christians, the Bible is our authority and guide for issues relating to the roles and relationships of husbands and wives, but Bible interpretation is not infallible, and highly respected evangelical scholars and Bible teachers are on both sides of the issue.

The starting point in the Bible is the creation story and the Fall. It should not surprise us, however, that traditionalists and egalitarians view the first three chapters of Genesis very differently. Some people make the generalization that egalitarians favor the creation account in chapter one, and traditionalists favor chapter two. Both chapters strongly affirm the woman as equal in creation to man. Nowhere in either chapter is the man in authority over the woman.

Traditionalists argue that the woman is created as helper and that places her in a subordinate role, but it has been pointed out many times that the Hebrew word for "helper" is most often used for God. Some also argue that the man named the woman, and that gave him authority over her. But the man did not name the woman until after the fall.

Recent efforts to argue that the woman is under the authority of the man go far beyond those writers who have been cited in the past. Ray Ortlund writes, "The man was not created to help the woman, but the reverse." And this aspect of manhood and womanhood is "nonreversible." Indeed, helping is reversible. Concerning Adam's sin, Ortlund writes that Adam's abandoning "his post as head was wrong," and he goes on to ask, "Are we to institutionalize sex role reversal in Evangelicalism in the name of the God who condemned it in the beginning?" If Adam's abandoning his post as head was wrong, and if this was something God had condemned in the beginning, this should correctly be regarded as sin, which would mean that Adam sinned before the fall.

A straightforward reading of the creation story portrays an equal partnership enjoyed by both man and woman. The fall distorts God's perfect order, and one effect of that is male rulership, demonstrated time and again throughout the Old Testament. Through Christ, however, we are redeemed. Though still infected with our sin natures, we are no longer under the curse. Jesus refused to make a distinction between the guilt of a man and the guilt of a woman.

Some would argue that while Jesus might be perceived to be egalitarian, Paul favors male rulership. We must keep in mind, however, that household codes found in Ephesians, Colossians, Titus, and 1 Peter reflect the culture of the times. Women were property of their husbands as were the household slaves, and all of these codes speak to the treatment of slaves.

The Ephesians 5 household code begins with a ringing endorsement of what I term servanthood equality. Many Bible translations place this verse in the preceding paragraph, leaving it out of the household code proper, but the text does not permit this. Are husbands then supposed to submit to their wives? The way the husband is to be submissive is by loving his wife and sacrificing himself for her as Christ did for the Church.

What is most striking about the Ephesians passage is that

only three verses are focused on the wife while seven verses are focused on the husband. Why the extra attention to men? That the husband and wife were to be subject to one another had to be rather startling, and that a husband was to love his wife as Christ loved the Church was certainly a standard far beyond what was expected of husbands in the ancient world.

But if Ephesians 5 teaches mutual submission, many would argue that 1 Corinthians 11 clearly teaches male headship. "Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God." In this passage, the context indicates the meaning of head is most likely "source" or "origin". Paul is talking about origins, creation and birth. Woman was taken from man in creation, and man has his origin in woman through birth.

Who then is the head of the home? The phrase "head of the home" is common in our contemporary vocabulary, though uncommon in the Bible except in the sense of owner or one who was in charge of the home. In 1 Timothy 5: 14, Paul admonishes younger women to manage their households. A man is also admonished in 1 Timothy 3 to manage his own household. Different Greek words are both rendered "manage" in the English. The one associated with men, means to be up front or to exercise leadership. The word used in reference to young widows, however, is commonly used in the Gospels to mean owner or ruler of the household.

In addition to biblical admonitions on marriage, we have many biblical examples of marriage, and very egalitarian marriages considering the times. In the Old Testament, Adam and Eve set the stage. Even after the fall, wives often appear to have considerable freedom. This is true of Sarah, a strong and independent woman. Rebekah, Deborah, Hannah, and Abigail also display considerable independence as wives, as is the woman of Proverbs 31, who is set forth as an ideal largely because of her independence and her resourcefulness.

In the New Testament, we also see evidence of some strongly independent wives, such as Priscilla, the wife of Aquila. But Mary, the mother of Jesus is worth noting as well, though there are conflicting interpretations of her role as wife and mother.

Ten: Does the model of mutual submission and equality foster confusion regarding masculinity and femininity? Masculinity and femininity is God-given, not artificially constructed. It is part of the very fabric of our being and identity. An individual's assertiveness or passiveness should not be confused with gender.

Scripture and good judgment tell us that a pattern of mutual submission and equal partnership is the best way we can effectively serve the Lord in a marriage relationship. This is a crucial issue for young adults today and an issue that deserves serious study and contemplation. May God guide us as we seek His will for our lives and our relationships. ■

The questions and discussion that followed these presentations (plus the full presentation itself) are available on video and audio tape from CACE.

The Irony of Evangelical Recovery: What's to be Done Now?

by Lynn R. Buzzard, Professor of Law, Campbell University

In the last issue of *Discernment* (Fall 1995), Professor Buzzard outlined a "cultural crisis" in education, media, and family life, then raised serious questions about how Christians understand mission in the modern world. Here is his conclusion and call to renewed evangelical faith.

Retooling the Christian Community

If my diagnosis is correct, it poses serious risks for the Christian community. If we are forced to accept short term failure to redirect the spiritual life of the nation and its culture, I fear what it may do to us at several levels:

1. Engagement level

Having attempted an engagement with the culture — a run at politics, a term on the school board — but failing to stem the tide, many will pack it in, complaining of the bias against faith and the refusal to face first principles, and then abandon the whole engagement with public life. We will write it off as a hopeless enterprise, take our marbles and go home. Emotionally, we'll go monastic!

2. Theological level

One of the most serious risks is that we will abandon the cultural engagement and ignore the task of developing a theology of public life, law, the state, and culture.

We will shake the dust off our feet, and retreat to the privatistic life of the believing community—and perhaps even justify our retreat by declarations of separatistic holiness and declarations of the inherent evils of government and culture.

3. Style level

As a matter of style, we may be tempted to develop a confrontational, hostile style toward the culture and those who control it. We may follow the confrontational model of Moses and give little attention to the models of Joseph, Daniel, Esther, and others who, while preserving their uniqueness, bore faithful witness and were uniquely positioned to be instruments of God at times of cultural drift.

4. Psychological level

Part of the mystery of the life of faith is its capacity to produce a sense of peace, even joy, in the midst of troubling, debilitating circumstances. The biblical image is that of singing a song in a strange land. But a people so dependent on the support of the culture may find it difficult to feel that joy which is the mark of faith. The dominant mood may be anger and resentment, robbing the church of the vitality of hope and joy. Psychologically, we become depressed!

5. Spiritual level

The church may begin to confuse spirituality with eccentricity. Superficial distinctives will become the signs of spirituality, avoiding drinking, dancing, pool halls, card playing, jewelry etc. Such notions surely reinforced the uniqueness of the evangelical community of a generation past, perhaps even serving a legitimate limited sociological role—but they lack internal power and public credibility. Spiritually, we go weird!

A Survival Strategy - Keeping a Choir and Singing a Song in Babylon

To use Schaeffer's famous phrase, "How should we then live?" How should we live in a hostile culture, as strangers in a strange land? How should we sing a song in Babylon? Allow me to make some suggestions—some perspectival, some concrete.

1. Strategic Doctrine

Recover the biblical faith of the prophet—Break any linkage between faithfulness and success

The Old Testament prophets Amos, Hosea, and Ezekiel had little doubt about the ultimate victory of God. Ezekiel's vision of the river flowing throughout the whole earth, or the resurrected dry bones, are ample evidence that he did not live in ultimate despair. Believers are finally "overcomers" as Revelation vividly illustrates. Paul in Ephesians 1:9-10 assures us that we do not live in anxiety because God's eternal purpose is that in the fullness of time all will be under Christ.

But the prophets had no illusions about life before the "fullness of time," nor did they believe that their prophecies, in and of themselves, would create restoration, or that their faithfulness would necessarily be rewarded with public acclamation for contributing to the salvation of the nation. The honors of prophets are almost universally posthumous.

Surely an element of living faithfully in a new Diaspora will be the capacity for faithful proclamation apart from polling data, public acclaim, or audience receptivity. The ultimate measure of faithfulness and obedience cannot be audience sensitivity.

"But if not . . ." commitments

The Israelite children declared their confidence that God could and would deliver them from Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace, but the text notes that their assumptions about deliverance were not determinative of their faithfulness. They declared their faith in deliverance, but added, "but if not we will still not bow. . . ." We must be prepared to act faithfully, powerfully and redemptively even if we experience no immediate deliverance from the principalities and powers that dominate the culture.

Issues/Problems:

How do we inculcate a faithfulness unrelated to visible success, while maintaining engagement and ultimate hopefulness? How do we avoid a defeatist mentality, a siege mentality? How do we prophetically speak to the principalities and powers when they don't invite us into their counsels? In very

practical terms, what do we have to say today? How shall we say it? Where shall we say it? Is there a model other than the bearded, bedraggled demonstrator with the “Repent” sign?

2. Strategic Sociology—Identity:

Accept minority status: strangers and aliens

It is essential that we accept the socially uncomfortable position of being what the Bible insists we are—aliens and strangers to this age.

Americans have had a luxury, or curse, of having lived in a brief moment in human history and geography when the Gospel was seriously believed, even if not often followed, by a large percentage of the nation. The institutions and structures of society—schools, scouts, social clubs, parades—all shared a core of moral beliefs and helped us raise our children. We easily merged our patriotism, employment, education, and entertainment into one comfortable cultural whole—a sort of civil religion, Bellah and others would say. You didn’t have to choose—you could have it all. Separation of church and state was easy when the mayor was also the chairman of the deacons.

It is simply no longer true. There are remnants in some institutions and certainly communities where the legacy of Christian values has not yet been totally spent, but in the main, Christians must face a degree of strangeness for which they are unprepared, and often seem to tenaciously avoid.

While in society, a little religion may be acceptable, certainly a serious dose of spiritual commitment is more likely to be seen in psychiatric terms than spiritual categories. How strikingly similar the public attitude is becoming to the more blatant former Soviet practice of sending Christians and other dissidents to psychiatrists for “treatment.”

The culture, considering you a bit of a kook, will not proudly celebrate its own attitude to you as “toleration”—by which they will *not* mean they affirm the importance of the spiritual perspective you might bring to the marketplace of ideas, but rather how good *they* are to accept the village idiot and no longer run him out of town.

This “alienness,” which is our short term calling, is a most painful reality. It runs against the grain of our desire to be included and valued. Not only youth are pressured by peer groups. We are all being “squeezed” into the mold of this world order. An urgent task of the church, then, must be to help believers face the strangeness of faith—not to simply endure it, but to maintain grace in the face of the sociological rejection.

Don’t rely on privileges, favors

In a visit to Romania in the eighties, I recall a service at the large Baptist church in Oradea, Romania—a church under constant government pressure. On a Sunday evening as I stood on the platform of the church and observed the late teens and young adults—perhaps a hundred or more standing in the main portion of the sanctuary, I was struck with how clearly these youth, simply by attending church, had already given up any chance at foreign travel. Many educational doors would be

closed, and the privileges of the culture would largely be denied them. The state security bureaucrats who boldly sat in the front row that evening undoubtedly knew them.

The youth of the church were the very opposite of many of our youth—the yuppies, eager to gain the goodies of the society and all its blessings. I contrasted the hopes and dreams of Oradean youth with those of most parents of America’s Christian youth. We yearn for our children to gain the good things of culture—prestigious education, upwardly mobile careers, comfortable lives—all the things that are simply not possible for many who are openly faithful to Christ in much of the world.

In Oradea they had made their choice—parents and youth. They knew the consequences: the isolation, marginalization, loss of privileges. But more importantly, they knew that “what doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?” They knew that to overcome the adversary they had to “love not their lives even unto death.”

When I returned, my home congregation wondered if the church in Romania would survive? I replied that I had little concern for the survival of the church in Romania, but much for the church in America.

We must develop a body of the faithful who are not so easily bribed and seduced by status, honors, prizes and awards of the prevailing powers. Such believers must find their value, their security, their self-worth, their hope in other things.

Of course, the core issue, in one respect, is one of identity. I recall the story of a communist recruiter whose first task when a “convert” enthusiastically presented himself was to send him to the streets to sell the *Daily Worker*. This was not, he wrote, to market the paper so much as to force the person to become identified—because a clear sense of identity was prerequisite to training and real commitment. Identity would be found, he went on, not only in those who affirmed and included you, but also in facing the rejection or even ridicule of those who opposed you.

To this day, few Christians at work or play are identified by colleagues by the one characteristic which their faith says is the most significant—their relationship to Jesus Christ.

Issues/Problems

How do we enable persons to accept their spiritual distinctives as a unique people of God—a strangeness—without creating a distorted personality? How can we assure that the “strangeness” is properly related to our distinct identity, and not to our own self-generated, bizarre conduct? How do we deal with the seductive power of the larger community and culture? How do we assure the youth of proper self-esteem when we are asking them to be a “set apart” people? What can we learn from the experiences of other counter-cultural groups which have faced the hostility, disdain, ridicule, or persecution of the dominant culture, such as the Jewish community and dissenter religious bodies? How should Christians in professions with strong links to the “powers,” such as law and government policy-making, deal with these tensions?

3. Strategic Systems/Structures Build the Infrastructures of Faith

If believers are to maintain a vibrant faith, we must take much more seriously the kind of social and community structures which sustain Christian people.

Historically, subcultural communities that were committed to a thriving presence have built internal institutions, traditions, celebrations, and rituals which keep the community and its identity alive.

Much of the life of the church today still reflects a world long since past—a world in which the church provided a weekly booster-shot for the life of faith and relied heavily on all the other social and spiritual needs of believers as well as citizens. The church provided a weekly Sunday School lesson and a worship service or two, and often a week's revival preaching for adults and VBS for the kids.

Today, there is a serious question whether any person's faith can thrive with a couple of hours of religious input in the face of the mass of messages from media, entertainment, law, and other sources which constantly undermine the verbal messages of the church. It is no wonder that we have churchmen who can on Sunday affirm the creed, be moved by the praise songs, hear the Word—but act in ways which seem to have no relationship to their position as a child of God during the rest of the week.

Is it a surprise that we have youth who on Sunday night affirm their commitment to Jesus, but on Friday night their sexual behavior reflects more the latest pop record?

If Christian faith is not just a set of "add-on" belief accessories to an otherwise secular life, but in effect, a subculture with its distinctive beliefs, mores, values, and traditions, then, can it survive on a two-hour weekly dose in the face of intensive indoctrination from hostile MTV and TV sitcoms?

Recovery of "church" (small "c")

I am persuaded that churches must take much more seriously the building of structures, social groups, experiences, rites of passage, etc. which provide a milieu in which faith can thrive—an ecosystem, if you will, with the proper balance of nutrients. This is likely to mean a substantially intensified emphasis on personal spiritual disciplines, consistent commitments to small groups, supportive communities, the recovery of church discipline, and renewed emphasis on holiness.

Negatively, the recovery of "church" will mean major reductions in the "investment" (time, energy, loyalty) believers give to competing identity and social groups, including those not overtly hostile but merely competitive for their loyalty. The race is won, Paul notes, by laying aside "every weight."

We can no longer function as if the "norm" for most believers will be a couple of hours on Sunday.

This will run against the current trend of the church to diminish its expectations in the face of increasing time demands for Little League, the burgeoning entertainment industry, and intensive work habits. The pattern has been for churches to recognize they are no longer the only option for

a Sunday night activity, and to surrender to the NFL or television. The effect, of course, has been that the church as a social unit of relationship and meaning has decreased for most persons, including church leadership. Try to find a meeting time for church leaders. Watch the loyalty patterns. If there is no civic club meeting that night, and no Little League, and no reception, and no important ball game—then you have a chance—if it isn't going to last too long!

The issue is not one of more church services, but of a richer and comprehensive set of relationships which nurture redemptive communities of faith.

"Church" must cease to be understood in the narrow sense of either the building or even a set of specific activities (three hymns, offering, sermon). Church must be what it was meant to be — the community of faith. To be "in the church" was to be a community, to have a special distinguishing identity, to have entered into a pilgrimage — not merely on a membership list or taking your turn as a trustee or donate to cushion the pews.

Yet, as many have observed for twenty years, the church as a community has been replaced by the church as a rather limited structural entity offering its hourly ritual. And sadly, many believers have similarly viewed the church. The faith of many persons is so individualistic and private, that the notion of a faith community of accountability and mutuality smacks of some dangerous cultic movement of the '60s. More than one state legislature has expressed this popular view by considering bills which would have given relatives temporary custody of persons who had converted to some religion involving intense commitments, the rejection of former friends, and new strong group loyalties. Such persons were to be "deprogrammed." Sounds like Paul and most of the early church would have been caught in that net. The world is suspicious of intense religion.

There is no warrant from Scripture to believe that genuine faith and spiritual life may thrive in the absence of intensive relationships among believers. The fellowship supper is grossly inadequate to any conception of biblical fellowship.

Recovery of Family and Parenting

Surely chief among the structural revolutions necessary to recover the church will be recovering the educational and nurturing role of the family—a role largely lost with parents relying almost exclusively on schools, churches, television, and other surrogates to nurture their children. It will be essential not only to inculcate certain values but to develop in children the discernment required to recognize the deceptions of popular culture.

The church response to the family crisis must be much more systemic than decrying television family images or attacking homosexual affirmations prevalent in many schools today. As clearly as it is that homosexuality reflects a clear departure from God's order for sexuality, the far more destructive sexual issue in our churches and communities is unfaithfulness in marriage, fornication, and especially the problem of divorce.

There must be frontal assault on the divorce culture. The collapse of marriages is a major component, I believe, of our national crisis with youth, the cities, and crime. If we cannot speak definitively and powerfully about the collapse of marriage as an institution right in our own church communities, we will have surrendered much of our moral capital. Divorce is destroying our children, wreaking economic disaster mainly on women, and reflects the full manifestation of the egoism, hedonism, self-fulfillment delusion, and covenant breaking that mark our cultural life. The community must learn to nurture families, equip people to deal with conflicts, enable people to learn to love. That includes saying "NO!" to divorce.

The very practical matter of television must be addressed. It poses two distinctive threats—first, its value system is typically anathema to Christian faith; but second, and maybe ultimately more critically, it's a supplanter. It robs families of time, communication, teaching, sharing, playing.

Consider prayer. Family devotions, a tradition which had some significant observance in previous generations, is now apparently quite rare. Perhaps instead of advocating "Prayer in Schools" we could promote "Prayer in Homes."

It may well be that the most critical pastoral task today is to equip families in specific ways to live Christianly — giving priority to spiritual values, adopting spiritual disciplines in the home, enabling parents to creatively teach their faith to their children.

Recovery of Education

From the earliest biblical duty of covenant members to teach their children the faith, believers have known of the high calling of teaching the faith.

We have largely abdicated that role in the family and given it to public educators and Sunday School teachers. It is interesting to note that one of the objections to Sunday Schools when they were first suggested was that they would have the effect of supplanting the parental task. The advocates replied that the Sunday School was for children whose parents were not believers—it was an outreach. The critics turned out to be prophetic.

In how many homes do parents take time to teach the faith, to recount the biblical stories, to introduce their children to God, to teach them to pray? How often do parents help children understand their experiences—fun, hurt, disappointment, death, failure, sin, guilt—in terms of their relationship to God? Not many!

Help people think Christianly

It will be part of the double irony that only in such an exile context may the church really be forced to think Christianly — foundationally — about all those things that we have failed to critically imagine in the heydays of our comfort.

We shall be forced to offer an alternative to the positivism, materialism, evolutionism, nihilism, hedonism of the contemporary culture. Like monastic seminaries safeguarding the

learning of the ancients while the Germanic or Asian hordes sweep across the land, the church must preserve and enhance its intellectual and spiritual heritage.

If we are to live out the double life — citizen of another world, yet engaged in this world — it is crucial we develop the capacity for thinking Christianly, and discerning the signs.

Harry Blamires in his book *The Christian Mind*, noted the tragic failure of Christians in modern times to think like Christians. We have, he noted a Christian morality, a Christian ethics, a Christian liturgy, but we have not disciplined ourselves to think as Christians. Our ideas are all shaped by secular impulses. Again, in the light of this, it is not surprising that we have schizophrenic believers: persons of personal piety whose lives in business, law, the arts, and so on are not in the least touched by any Christian world view.

Generations of believers have grown up in churches which may have emphasized an evangelical commitment but have eschewed theology. They have substituted a MUZAK soft version of God loves you and you're forgiven if you want it, for a profound understanding of man, nature, creation, history, sin.

Pastors seem ill at ease with theology, and are much more at home with Rogerian counseling or management seminars. As a result, lay persons and pastors alike seem quite ill at ease in any serious intellectual inquiry. Such sloppy thinking may not have been so disastrous when the underlying principles were largely held in common, and we could invite persons to act on what they deeply believed. But that generation has passed.

Closely related to thinking Christianly is the art of discernment. If there is a gift needed today it is the gift of discernment — the capacity, the insight to recognize the messages of the culture, the siren song.

Youth must be able to "hear" with ears that hear the message of the music which floods their world: the subtle or not so subtle suggestions of the sitcom; the implications of a positivist view of law or a deterministic, evolutionist conception of man and matter.

Yet we have not equipped our community for such a task. We have bemoaned the evils, urged youth to flee from temptation, but we have not equipped them with the tools for spiritual discernment. They wouldn't know a worldview if it ran over them. They wouldn't recognize a hedonist, determinist, positivist sentiment. They cannot unmask the deception of the "deceiver of the world."

So we ask: What changes in the pastoral role will be required to address issues of biblical worldview awareness? How is a Christian mind relevant to all believers, not just those with academic or intellectual interests? Why did we lose the universities to secularism? Can we establish a credible intellectual Christian ideology? Is "discernment" a matter of Christian thinking, or more of a spiritual gift or art?

A Recovered Apologetic Focus

It is increasingly clear that, as others have rightly noted, the

old gospel invitation to “come home” to faith no longer has meaning to those who were never at “home” with the faith. I am struck with how little the secularist law student knows of what Christians really believe; and even the very simplistic notions of many “church” kids.

The scope of the claims of the Gospel, the biblical view of history, notions of the nature of humankind and the meaning of life, are simply foreign to modern young adults. While many would profess a belief in God, even in Christ, they have no conception of theology. They may believe they know what Christianity is about, and may be convinced it has no credible appeal — but it is no more reflective than an American’s instinctive dislike for horse meat or eel. Tragically, even those who “accept” the Gospel commonly have little conception of its core principled roots and convictions.

The task, then, is to realize that culturally we are much more like the first century church in Rome, than the little brown church in the vale of the American small town in the Norman Rockwell picture. We have an apologetics task at the most fundamental level.

Fortunately the issues in such an apologetic inquiry are indeed the urgent issues of not only western culture but the developing nations of Asia and the former Soviet Union. They are the issues of the meaning of human life, the values which shall shape education and public policy, the issues of environmental and human engineering.

So we ask: Is apologetics really the point of engagement with skeptics? How far will apologetics take us in the engagement with persons with sincere doubts? If the typical person no longer has that religious heritage to draw on, what are the implications for our evangelistic styles? Our church-outreach efforts? We have emphasized, at least in the West, the Gospel as forgiveness of sins and the covering of guilt. What if people don’t feel guilty?

Recover the Ministry of Hope

As ironic as it may sound, a feature of the church in exile, a church living in the midst of a collapsing social-political culture, will be its role as the locus of hope for the victims of the illusions of the day.

Just as early Christians rescued babies abandoned on the hillsides of Rome, so the church living in exile will be called upon to offer a place of hope and redemption to the victims of the hedonism, materialism, and paganism of the modern world. The theme of redemption may be the most powerful theme for modern man — the calling back to God’s intention of a lost and fallen life — its restoration. The church should posture itself for victim ministry in these times.

Undeniably, there will be victims — some will be relatively innocent victims of the ideologies and their necessary consequences — others will be victimizers who finally, in the grace of God, have had to face their own hopelessness in the strange mix of freedom and determinism which mark modern man. Both will find a place of healing, of real love and care, of meaning. In their exhaustion from the fevered pace of

contemporary man’s quest for meaning in diversion and entertainment, they may finally seek peace and rest. The believing community is a wonderful place to discover that.

Many engaged with the sports, entertainment and political worlds can bear testimony to the tragedies experienced by so many in these subcultures often dominated by visions of the happiness and success that destroy persons and relationships. The modern rush to success eats its young and tramples its weak. The bars, halfway houses, drug treatment centers, and depressing bedrooms of plush homes are the places of refuge for the victims of the flight from responsibility and humanity.

The believing community is the sanctuary where the wasted find hope and peace.

So we ask: How can the believing community best offer to the “heavy laden” the rest of Christ? How can we identify and introduce the exhausted to the Gospel? What institutions and structures, what relationships, what places are crucial in such a refuge ministry? Who are the vulnerable today?

Conclusion

George Orwell, observing Europe’s rejection of God and subsequent social crisis, declared that the optimism of the disestablishers had been a serious miscalculation: the excision of faith “is not a simple surgical job.” The “wound,” he wrote, “tends to go septic.”

Perhaps today, the reverse is equally clear — the reassertion of the soul is not so simple either, but the Scriptures had revealed that long ago: “Narrow is the gate and few those who enter in.”

The task of the Church is enormous — but so are its resources in the Spirit and Lordship of Christ. ■

Ethics in the Trenches

Letter to the Editor

by Linda Z. Larsen

The reason for my writing, is to convey to you my heartfelt appreciation for the work of the Center for Applied Christian Ethics. Specifically, bringing C. Everett Koop to the College campus. I cannot fully express the profound effect and great encouragement he gave me when he addressed the issue of AIDS. I had lost my beloved twin brother to AIDS in May of 1989. Within one month of my twin’s death, God revealed to me in a dramatic way, to me in a dramatic way, that I was to enter a journey into AIDS ministry. God was asking me to lay aside my pride (mask) and my fear of people rejecting/abandoning me, and not run away from the issue of AIDS. He offered His extended hand to me, as He gently led me to address AIDS at my church.

God’s call was certainly out of my comfort zone - he was about to stretch me in unbelievable ways—for a specific time

and purpose. I discovered that God can use ordinary, weak, even depressed people. (I guess there are plenty such examples in the Bible.) It was almost a three year process—at times deeply wounding—to bring the issue of AIDS to Wheaton Evangelical Free Church. On March 1, 1992, (exactly 3 years to the day, Larry and I faced his AIDS diagnosis at Northwestern Memorial Hospital) I sat in my Pastor's office, along with the social issues committee, and we put the final touches on "Putting a face on AIDS," a two-part series held on consecutive Sunday nights March 22 and 29, 1992. Little did I know that God was preparing me to share "My journey with AIDS—from the heart of a twin"—to my whole church, no wonder it took so long!

It truly has been a "dark night of the soul" experience for me. This brings me back to Dr. Koop. His words: "this is not an age for the faint of heart and soul...AIDS has all the elements of a major human tragedy—FEAR, PREJUDICE, REJECTION and HOPELESSNESS" was a balm to my soul, encouraging me to continue the task when I was about to give up. He talked about the church separating the sin from the sinner...about fighting a disease, not people...about offering compassionate care for people with AIDS, and even Spiritual rebirth. He used Matthew 25:35-40 as his text. I have often used his words when I share my story with others. Finally, on his last visit to the campus, last fall, I approached him—only briefly—to thank him.

God is continuing to allow me to reach people touched by AIDS. I have had a support group in my home for nearly 4 years for people who have lost a family member to the disease. It has grown to include mothers/sisters who have a family member living with AIDS—dealing with anticipatory grief. I had searched frantically for such a group when I lost Larry, but there was nothing available anywhere in the Chicago area. I am also involved in LOVE & ACTION of St. Charles. Thus, I'm able to have contact with people both affected and infected with AIDS. Additionally, once a month, I provide lunch for a support group of women with AIDS. Dr. Lewis has used me in his Human Sexuality classes at the College over the years, while he was Director of Counseling. Last Spring I addressed both his class and "Psychology of Family." This month, I will be sharing my story with the Arlington Heights Free Church. I still have my teary moments over the loss of my twin, no doubt that will continue until Heaven; but I often marvel at God's goodness and faithfulness to me. Through brokenness, He has brought about a revival in my heart. ■

We gratefully acknowledge the financial help provided by the Kemper Foundation in making this issue of *Discernment* possible.

Reading and Teaching the "Ethics of Family"

by Cynthia Jones Neal

To enter the "family" field of study, a person can read such a wide range of material, from marriage self-help books (of nearly every ilk) to raising teenagers to "new paradigms" for conceiving of family. The works I recommend here are for the thoughtful reader or teacher who seeks a challenge—a critical journey—into this growing field of study. Not all of the works cited here are Christian (that is, Bible based and grounded in commitment to historic faith), and not all Christians will agree with these authors.

People sometimes ask how ethics should be taught, or whether it can be taught. I teach ethics (I think every teacher of every subject does) from the perspective of developmental psychology. That makes it rather easy. My colleagues in math and astronomy may have the harder task.

Ethical thinking must permeate family life. Issues of justice and compassionate response are as important in the private sphere as the public. Students don't often consider these issues as they relate to family life. They are challenged when asked to consider parenting from an ethical perspective. Too often, family life is construed (by these young people) as a system of rules and regulations, rather than relationships and responsibilities. This construal, quite frequently, portrays the family as the domain of discipline rather than discipleship (a rather important distinction, in my view). My goal is to stretch their ideas, help them translate ethics into this essential sphere, the very sphere that morals are taught through word and example.

I continually ask students to reflect on the meaning of the good and true from their point of view, including their perspectives on the meaning of Scriptural texts. Those students enamored of rules may hear in me a challenge to grow in compassion, which means finding legitimate exceptions to their rules. This may include relinquishing rules that have no relevance when considering the law of love. Those students enamored with their personal preference (a pervasive form of egoism) hear in me a call to reach for standards and creeds formed out of and cherished by communities which deserve honor and allegiance, for example, the church. It is my conviction that the "morality of the cross" requires both a standard of justice and a response of compassion. Part of the success in teaching ethics is to listen well, and since I am a parent as well as a professor, I can tell you that this skill bears a huge impact at home, where, as stated earlier, the teaching of values is exceedingly important and bears scrutiny. Perhaps these readings will help in that "critical journey." ■

Cynthia Neal, Ph. D. is associate professor of psychology at Wheaton College and co-coordinator of the 1995 CACE faculty workshop on family values.

General Parenting Books

Balswick, Jack O. and Balswick, Judith K. (1989). *The Family: a Christian Perspective on the Contemporary Home*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House.

Osborne, Philip (1989). *Parenting for the 90's*. Intercourse, PA: Good Books.

Campbell, Ross (1977). *How to Really Love Your Child*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Jones, Stanton L. and Jones, Brenna B. (1993). *How and When to Tell Your Kids About Sex*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress.

Coles, Robert (1990). *The Spiritual Life of Children*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

McGinnis, Kathleen and McGinnis, James (1990). *Parenting for Peace and Justice: Ten Years Later*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.

Brazelton, T. Berry (1985). *Working and Caring*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.

Leach, Penelope (1978). *Your Baby and Child*. New York: Alfred A Knopf.

Tucker, Ruth A. (1994). *The Family Album: Portraits of Family Life Through the Centuries*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Gender Roles and Family

Van Leeuwen, Mary Stuart (1990). *Gender and Grace: Love, Work and Parenting in a Changing World*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Cook, Kaye and Lee, Lance (1992). *Man and Woman: Alone and Together*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Balswick, Jack (1992). *Men at the Crossroads: Beyond Traditional Roles and Modern Options*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

African-American Families

McAdoo, H. P. (1981). *Black Families*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Hill, R. B. (1972). *The Strengths of Black Families*. New York, NY: National Urban League.

Issues of Poverty and Family

Kotlowitz, Alex (1991). *There are no Children Here*. New York: Doubleday. This is the true portrait of two boys in a Chicago housing project (an inner city war zone) demonstrating the heroism required to survive.

Polakow, Valerie (1993). *Lives on the Edge: Single Mothers and Their Children in the Other America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Academic Works

Clapp, Rodney (1993). *Families at the Crossroads: Beyond Traditional Roles and Modern Options*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Anderson, Ray B. and Guernsey, Dennis B. (1985). *On Being Family: A Social Theology of the Family*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Clark, R. M. (1983). *Family Life and School Achievement: Why Poor Black Children Succeed or Fail*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Powell, D. R. (1989). *Families and Early Childhood Programs*. Washington, D. C: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Cochran, M., Lerner, M., Riley, D., Gunnarsson, L., & Henderson, C. H. (1990). *Extending Families: The Social Networks of Parents and Their Children*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Therapeutic Works

Carter, B. and McGoldrick, M. (1989). *The Changing Family Life Cycle: A Framework for Family Therapy*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

This is an excellent overview of the family from a developmental perspective. It is useful in differentiating the life cycle of the "traditional middle-class family" from other types of families (e.g., postdivorce family, remarried family, poor Black family, etc.) One word of warning, there is a chapter that includes a section on lesbians that may offend some evangelical readers.

McGouldrick, M. (1995). *You Can Go Home Again: Reconnecting with Your Family*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company.

This is more of an experiential approach to understanding family process and dynamics. It has a strong intergenerational flavor and emphasizes the importance of understanding one's own family history in shaping identity and interpersonal relationships. A unique feature is that the author uses genograms (family diagrams) of famous people (e.g., Freud, Dickens, Clinton, Beethoven, etc.) to illustrate the process.

Walsh, Froma (1993). *Normal Family Processes* (2nd ed.) . New York: Guilford Press.

Coverage of a variety of family forms is quite comprehensive and includes dual-earner families, divorced families, remarried families, and adoptive families. There is a chapter on lesbian and gay families. The book also covers issues that impact family functioning such as changing gender norms, ethnicity, race, class, poverty, serious illness and disability. Implications for family policy are addressed in the final chapter. ■

Back Issues *Discernment*

Vol. 1, No. 1, Winter 1992
On Being Truthful

Vol. 1, No. 2, Spring 1992
AIDS

Vol. 1, No. 3, Fall 1992
*Legalized
Physician-Assisted Suicide*

Vol. 2, No. 1, Spring 1993
Tough Choices in Health Care

Vol. 2, No. 2, Winter 1994
Moral Pluralism

Vol. 2, No. 3, Spring/Fall 1994
Activism, Protest, and Dissent

Vol. 3, No.2, Spring 1995
*Greed, Generosity, and
a Few Other Notes and Helps*

Vol. 3, No. 3, Fall 1995
*Renewing Earth
and Rebuilding Culture*

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CACE News and Notes

Bread for the World has produced a Background Paper titled "Shattered Families, Hungry People, Moral Crisis." It relates the Religious Right's focus on family values to Christian concern about hunger. Available for only 25 cents at (301) 608-2400.

Wheaton College sponsored a conference on "Valuing the Family" on March 13-15, 1996. All sessions are audio recorded. Write or email cace@dauid.wheaton.edu for brochure of sessions.

Phillip E. Johnson, law professor at the University of California at Berkeley and author of *Darwin on Trial* and *Reason in the Balance* will present a lecture (open to the public) on naturalism in science, education and law entitled "Is God Unconstitutional? Unscientific?" Responding to the lecture will be Lynn Buzzard, professor of law at Campbell University. March 25, 1996, 7:30 P.M. in Barrows Auditorium, Wheaton College.

We are interested in your comments and contributions on any aspect of applied Christian ethics. Our emphasis for the 1996-1997 school year will be "Welfare Reform: Issues of Justice and Love." Thoughtful, cutting edge articles not previously published (1000-2000 words) will be considered for publication. ■

CACE Monograph Booklets

- **On Being Truthful**, by Lewis Smedes, Ph.D. (1991)
- **In There a Right to Health Care?** by David B. Fletcher, Ph.D. (1991)
- **The Bible, Ethics, and Health Care: Theological Foundations for a Christian Perspective on Health Care**, by John F. Kilner, Ph.D. (1991)
- **The Sin of Greed and the Spirit of Christian Generosity**, by Robert C. Roberts, Ph.D. (1994)
- **Distinctive Responsibility for the Environment: A Christian Perspective**, by Susan Power Bratton, Ph.D. (1995)
- **Understanding Homosexuality**, by Gilbert Bilezikian, Ph.D., Stanton Jones, Ph.D., Don E. Workman, Ph.D., Dallas Willard, Ph.D., and Judy-Rae Karlsen (revised 1995)
- **Valuing Families and Family Values: A Christian Perspective**, by Moira Eastman, Ph.D. (forthcoming, 1996).

(Cost is \$3 per booklet, \$4 for **Understanding Homosexuality**)

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