



Eternal Perspectives

We fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen...

Winter 2005

What Will It Mean To See God? by Randy Alcorn



I shall rise from the dead....I shall see the Son of God, the Sun of Glory, and shine myself as that sun shines. I shall be united to the Ancient of Days, to God Himself, who had no morning, never began....No man ever saw God and lived. And yet, I shall not live till I see God; and when I have seen him, I shall never die.

John Donne

Inside this issue:

What Does Christmas Mean To Me?

6

New Book:
Why ProLife?

7

The Care of Orphans

10

Materialism, Man & Morality

12

A. W. Tozer on Failure and Success

16

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"O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water" (Psalm 63:1).

We may imagine we want a thousand different things, but God is the one we really long for. His presence brings satisfaction; his absence brings thirst and longing. *Our longing for Heaven is a longing for God*—a longing that involves not only our inner beings, but our bodies as well. Being with God is the heart and soul of Heaven. Every other heavenly pleasure will derive from and be secondary to his presence. God's greatest gift to us is, and always will be, himself.

God says his intention is that "in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:7). Those who know God well have only begun to know Him! Those who imagine they will tire of praising God in Heaven have not yet begun to grasp who God is, and the magnificent inexhaustible character of his wonders and joys.

A million years after he fashions a new universe (Revelation 21:1-4), we will know more of him than we've ever known. As we learn of Him throughout eternity we will never begin to exhaust the wonders of who He is.

The Beatific Vision

Ancient theologians spoke of the "beatific vision." The term comes from three Latin words that

together mean "a happy-making sight." The sight they spoke of was God Himself. Revelation 22:4 says of God's servants on the New Earth, "They will see his face." To see God's face is the loftiest of all aspirations—though sadly, for most of us, it's not at the top of our wish list. (If we understand what it means, it will be.)

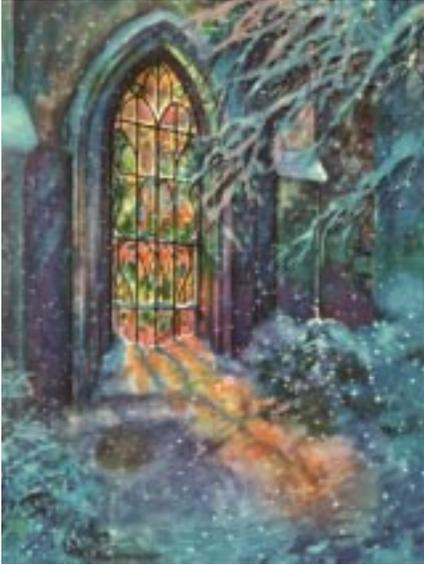
To be told we'll see God's face is *shocking* to anyone who understands God's transcendence and inapproachability. In ancient Israel, only the high priest could go into the Holy of Holies, and he but once a year. Even then, according to tradition, a rope was tied around the priest's ankle in case he died while inside the Holy of Holies. Why? Well, God struck down Uzzah for *touching* the Ark of the Covenant (2 Samuel 6:7). Who would volunteer to go into the Holy of Holies to pull out the high priest if God slew him?



When Moses said to God, "Show me your glory," God responded, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you. . . ." But, he said, "You cannot

see my face, for no one may see me and live. . . . When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen" (Exodus 33:18-23).

This is the wonder of our redemption—to be welcomed into the very presence of our Lord and to see him face-to-face. What will we see in his eyes?



Though we cannot experience its fullness yet, we can gain a foretaste now: "We have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus" (Hebrews 10:19); "Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace" (Hebrews 4:16, ESV).

Face of Father and Son

David says, "One thing I ask of the Lord, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple" (Psalm 27:4). David was preoccupied with God's person, and also with God's place. He longed to be where God was and to gaze on his beauty. To see God's face is to behold his beauty, which is the source of all lesser beauties.

God, who is transcendent, became immanent in Jesus Christ, who is Immanuel, "God with us" (Matthew 1:23). God the Son pitched his tent among us, on our Earth, as one of us (John 1:14). So whenever we see Jesus in Heaven, *we will see God*. Because Jesus Christ is God, and a permanent manifestation of God, he could say to Philip, "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9). Certainly, then, a primary way we will see the Father on the New Earth is through his Son, Jesus.

Jonathan Edwards emphasized Christ as the member of the Godhead we will see: "The seeing of God in the glorified body of Christ is the most perfect way of seeing God with the bodily eyes that can be; for in seeing a real body that one of the persons of the Trinity has assumed to be his body, and that he dwells in forever as his own in which the divine majesty and excellency appears as much as 'tis possible for it to appear in outward form or shape."

Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God" (Matthew 5:8).

Near the end of *The City of God*, Augustine addresses whether we will see God with physical eyes—or only with spiritual eyes—in our resurrection bodies: "It is possible, it is indeed most probable, that we shall then see the physical bodies of the new heaven and the new earth in such a fashion as to observe God in utter clarity and distinctness, seeing him everywhere present and governing the whole material scheme of things. . . . Perhaps God will be known to us and visible to us in the sense that he will be spiritually perceived by each of us in each one of us, perceived in one another, perceived by each in himself; he will be seen in the new

heaven and earth, in the whole creation as it then will be; he will be seen in every body by means of bodies, wherever the eyes of the spiritual body are directed with their penetrating gaze."

Will the Christ we worship in Heaven as God also be a man? Yes. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday [when he lived on Earth] and today [when he lives in the intermediate Heaven] and forever [when he will live on the New Earth, in the eternal Heaven]" (Hebrews 13:8). Christ didn't put on a body as if it were a coat. He didn't contain two separable components, man and God, to be switched on and off at will. Rather, he was and is and will be always a man *and* God.

When Christ died, he might have appeared to shed his humanity; but when he rose in an indestructible body, he declared his permanent identity as the God-man. J. I. Packer writes, "By incarnation the Son became more than he was before, and a human element became integral to the ongoing life of the Triune God. . . . Christ's glorified humanity, which is the template and link for the glorification that is ours, must go on forever." This is a mystery so great it should leave us breathless.

Job, in his anguish, cried out in a vision of striking clarity: "I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my

skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!" (Job 19:25-27). The anticipation of seeing God face-to-face, in our resurrected bodies, is heartfelt and ancient. "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another" (2 Corinthians 3:18, ESV). Our own beauty will increase as we behold God in his glory.

We need not wait till the New Earth to catch glimpses of God. We're told his "invisible qualities" can be "clearly seen" in "what has been made" (Romans 1:20). Consider the trees, flowers, sun, rain, and the people around you. Yes, there's devastation all around us and within us. Eden has been trampled, burned, and savaged. Yet the stars in the sky nevertheless declare God's glory (Psalm 19:1), as do animals, art, and music. But our vision is hampered by the same curse that infects all creation. One day both we and the universe will be forever cured of sin. In that day, *we will see God*.



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Seeing God: Our Primary Joy

In Heaven, the barriers between redeemed human beings and God will forever be gone. To look into God's eyes will be to see what we've always longed to see: the person who made us for his own good pleasure. Seeing God will be like seeing everything else for the first time. Why? Because not only will we see God, he will be the lens through which we see everything else—people, ourselves, and the events of this life.

What is the essence of eternal life? "That they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent" (John 17:3). Our primary joy in Heaven will be knowing and seeing God. Every other joy will be derivative, flowing from the fountain of our relationship with God.

Jonathan Edwards said, "God himself is the great good which they are brought to the possession and enjoyment of by redemption. He is the highest good, and the sum of all that good which Christ purchased. . . . The redeemed will indeed enjoy other things . . . but that which they shall enjoy in the angels, or each other, or in anything else whatsoever, that will yield them delight and happiness, will be what will be seen of God in them."

Asaph says, "Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you" (Psalm 73:25). This may seem an overstatement—there's *nothing* on Earth this man desires but God? But he's affirming that the central desires of our heart are for God. Yes, we desire many other things—but in desiring them, it is really *God* we desire. Augustine called God "the end of our desires." He prayed, "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you."

Suppose you're sick. Your friend brings a meal. What meets your needs—the meal or the friend? *Both*. Of course, without your friend, there would be no meal; but even without a meal, you would still treasure your friendship. Hence, your friend is both your higher pleasure *and* the source of your secondary pleasure (the meal). Likewise, God is the source of all lesser goods, so that when they satisfy us, it's God himself who satisfies us. (In fact, it's God who satisfies you by giving you the friend who gives you the meal.)

Whenever I speak of the wonders of Heaven and longing for Heaven and the multifaceted joys of the resurrected life in the new universe, some people respond, *But our eyes should be on the giver, not the gift; we must focus on God, not on Heaven.*

This approach sounds spiritual, but it erroneously divorces our experience of God from life, relationships, and the world—all of which God graciously gives us. It sees the material realm and other people as God's competitors rather than as instruments that communicate his love and character. It fails to recognize that because God is the ultimate source of joy, and all secondary joys emanate from him, to love secondary joys on Earth *can be*—and in Heaven *always will be*—to love God, their source.

Though Christoplatonism frowns upon the pleasures of the physical world, mistaking asceticism for spirituality, Scripture says we are to put our hope not in material things but "in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment" (1 Timothy 6:17). If he provides everything for our enjoyment, we shouldn't feel guilty for enjoying it, should we?

Paul says it is demons and liars who portray the physical realm as unspiritual, forbid people from the joys of marriage, including sex, and "order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer" (1 Timothy 4:3-5).

Because of the current darkness of our hearts, we must be careful not to make idols out of God's provisions. But once we're freed from sin and we're in God's presence, we'll never

have to worry about putting people or things above God. That would be unthinkable. (Were we thinking clearly, it would be unthinkable to us *now*.)

God isn't displeased when we enjoy a good meal, marital sex, a football game, a cozy fire, or a good book. He's not up in Heaven frowning at us and saying, "Stop it—you should only find joy in me." This would be as foreign to God's nature as our heavenly Father as it would be to mine as an earthly father if I gave my daughters a Christmas gift and started pouting because they enjoyed it too much. No, I gave the gift to bring joy to them and to me—if they didn't take pleasure in it, I'd be disappointed. Their pleasure in my gift to them draws them closer to me. I am *delighted* that they enjoy the gift.



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“We will constantly be more amazed with God, more in love with God, and thus ever more relishing his presence and our relationship with him.”

Sam Storms

Of course, if children become so preoccupied with the gift that they walk away from their father and ignore him, that's different. Though preoccupation with a God-given gift can turn into idolatry, enjoying that same gift with a grateful heart can draw us closer to God. In Heaven we'll have no capacity to turn people or things into idols. When we find joy in God's gifts, we will be finding our joy in him.

God-Given (Derivative) and Secondary Joys

All secondary joys are *derivative* in nature. They cannot be separated from God. Flowers are beautiful for one reason—God is beautiful. Rainbows are stunning because God is stunning. Puppies are delightful because God is delightful. Sports are fun because God is fun. Study is rewarding because God is rewarding. Work is fulfilling because God is fulfilling.

Ironically, some people who are the most determined to avoid the sacrilege of putting things before God miss a thousand daily opportunities to thank him, praise him, and draw near to him, because they imagine they shouldn't enjoy the very things he made to help us know him and love him.

God is a lavish giver. “He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?” (Romans 8:32). The God who gave us his Son delights to graciously give us “all things.” These “all things” are in addition to Christ, but they are never *instead* of him—they come, Scripture tells us, “along with him.” If we didn't have Christ, we would have nothing. But because we have Christ, we have everything. Hence, we can enjoy the people and things God has made, and in the process enjoy the God who designed and provided them for his pleasure and ours.

God welcomes prayers of thanksgiving for meals, warm fires, games, books, relationships, and every other good thing. When we fail to acknowledge God as the source of all good things, we fail to give him the recognition and glory he deserves. We separate joy from God, which is like trying to separate heat from fire or wetness from rain.

The movie *Babette's Feast* depicts a conservative Christian sect that scrupulously avoids “worldly” distractions until a woman's creation of a great feast opens their eyes to the richness of God's provision. *Babette's Feast* beautifully illustrates that we shouldn't ignore or minimize God's lavish, creative gifts, but we should enjoy them and express heartfelt gratitude to God for all of life's joys. When we do this, instead of these things drawing us *from* God, they draw us *to* God. That's precisely what all things and all beings in Heaven will do—draw us to God, never away from him.

Every day we should see God in his creation: in the food we eat, the air we breathe, the friendships we enjoy, and the pleasures of family, work, and hobbies. Yes, we must sometimes forgo secondary pleasures, and we should never let them eclipse God. And we should avoid opulence and waste when others are needy. But we should thank God for all of life's joys, large and small, and allow them to draw us to him.

That's exactly what we'll do in Heaven . . . so why not start now?

Seeing God in Everything Good

Sam Storms writes, “We will constantly be more amazed with God, more in love with God, and thus ever more relishing his presence and our relationship with him. Our experience of God will never reach its consummation. We will never finally arrive, as if upon reaching a peak we discover there is nothing beyond. Our experience of God will never become stale. It will deepen and develop, intensify and amplify, unfold and increase, broaden and balloon.”

Beholding and knowing God, we will spend eternity worshiping, exploring, and serving him, seeing his magnificent beauty in everything and everyone around us. Augustine wrote in *The City of God*, “We shall in the future world see the material forms of the new heavens and the new earth in such a way that we shall most distinctly recognize God everywhere present and governing all things, material as well as spiritual.” In the new universe, as we study nature, as we pursue science and mathematics and every realm of knowledge, we'll see God in everything, for he's behind it all.

Many commoners in history would have thought it the ultimate experience to gain an audience with their human king, to meet him face-to-face. How much greater will it be to see God in his glory? There could be no higher privilege, no greater thrill. All our explorations and adventures and projects in the eternal Heaven—and I believe there will be many—will pale in comparison to the wonder of seeing God. Yet everything else we do will help us to see God better, to know him and worship him better.



God promised Simeon, a "righteous and devout" old man who lived in Jerusalem at the time of Christ's birth, that he would not die until he had seen the Messiah. The culminating joy of Simeon's life was to see Jesus when Joseph and Mary brought him to the temple (Luke 2:25-32). We too have been promised that we'll see Jesus. As Simeon lived his earthly life in anticipation of seeing Jesus, so should we. All else—in this world and the next—will be secondary to beholding our Lord. To see Jesus—what could be greater? "We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2).

We will see Christ in his glory. The most exhilarating experiences on Earth, such as white-water rafting, skydiving, or extreme sports, will seem tame com-

pared to the thrill of seeing Jesus. (By the way, there's no biblical basis for believing we will not enjoy such activities as resurrected people on the New Earth.)

Being with him. Gazing at him. Talking with him. Worshiping him. Embracing him. Eating with him. Walking with him. Laughing with him. Imagine it!

Will we ever tire of praising him? Augustine writes, "God himself, who is the Author of virtue, shall be our reward. As there is nothing greater or better than God himself, God has promised us himself. God shall be the end of all our desires, who will be seen without end, loved without cloy, and praised without weariness."

(This article is condensed from a chapter in Randy's new book, *Heaven*, now available in bookstores.)



How To Fight the Sin of Pride Especially When You Are Praised: *Ten Things I Do* by John Piper

I call to mind that I am not self-existent; only the triune God is. Only God is absolute, but I am contingent. I remind myself that I am utterly dependent on God for my origin and for my present and future existence. I call this to mind and ponder its truth.

I remember that I am by nature a depraved sinner and that, in all my sinning, I have treated God with contempt, preferring other things to his glory. I take stock that I have never done a good deed for which I don't need to repent. Each one is flawed because perfection is commanded. Therefore I realize that God owes me nothing but pain in this life and the next.

I ponder that this condition of mine is so desperate that it could only be remedied at the cost of the horrid death of the Son of God, to bear my punishment and provide my righteousness. And I revel in the forgiveness and righteousness that is mine in Christ.

I meditate on those Scriptures that say, "Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.' Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you," (1 Peter 5:5-6; see James 4:6-10). And, "He who is least among you all is the one who is great" (Luke 9:48; Mark 9:35; Matthew 20:26).

I pray that the eyes of my heart would see these biblical truths for what they really are.

I ask God to make me not just see them but also *feel* them with a sense of the meekness and lowliness and brokenness that corresponds to their true weight.

I renounce desires for praise and notoriety and esteem when I see them rising. I say, "No! In the name of Jesus get out of my head!" And I turn my mind afresh with prayer toward the beauty and truth and worth of Christ.

I try to receive all criticism—from friend or foe—with the assumption that there is almost certainly some truth in it that I can benefit from. "Be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger" (James 1:19).

I strive to cultivate a joy in Christ and his wisdom and power and justice and love that is more satisfying than the pleasures of human praise, with the goal that, by the Spirit, I would be granted the miracle of self-forgetfulness in the admiration of Christ, and in love toward people.

Finally, I turn often to older writers who knew God at depths which most of us modern people seem incapable of. I turn, for example, to Jonathan Edwards whose descriptions of humility awaken the deepest longings in me, as, for example, when he wrote to Mrs. Peperell on November 28, 1751, concerning Christ:

He is indeed possessed of infinite majesty, to inspire us with reverence and adoration; yet that majesty need not terrify us, for we behold it blended with humility, meekness, and sweet condescension. We may feel the most profound reverence and self-abasement, and yet our hearts be drawn forth sweetly and powerfully into an intimacy the most free, confidential, and delightful. The dread, so naturally inspired by his greatness, is dispelled by the contemplation of his gentleness and humility; while the familiarity, which might otherwise arise from this view of the loveliness of his character merely, is ever prevented by the consciousness of his infinite majesty and glory; and the sight of all his perfections united fills us with sweet surprise and humble confidence, with reverential love and delightful adoration. (*Works*, Vol. 1 (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth), p. cxxxix)

(By John Piper, November 10, 2004, ©Desiring God, Website: www.desiringGod.org)

*All of you,
clothe yourselves
with humility
toward one
another, because,
"God opposes the
proud but gives
grace to the
humble."
Humble yourselves,
therefore, under
God's mighty
hand, that he
may lift you up
in due time.*

1 Peter 5:5-6

What Does Christmas Mean To Me? by Randy Alcorn

Randy's responses to questions in a recent interview



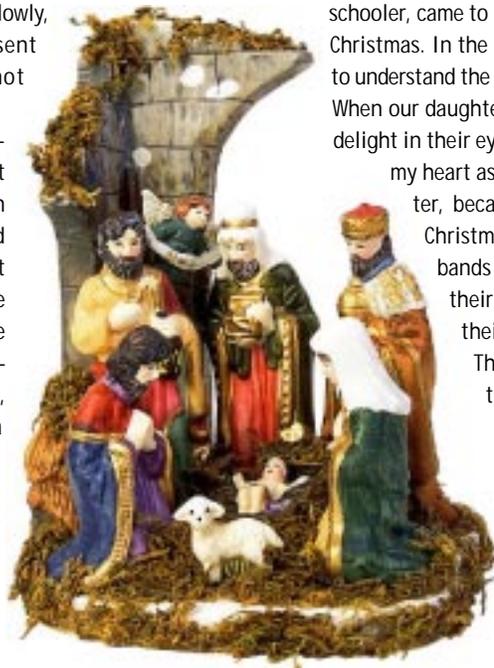
What is your fondest Christmas memory?

My mother's smile. I vividly remember 40 years ago, sitting at a dining room table with my mother and brother, after a huge turkey dinner and opening presents on Christmas Eve. I remember playing Monopoly at the same table on which my little girls ate Christmas dinner twenty years later, in Nanci's and my home (after my mom died). Though I didn't grow up in a Christian home, I had the privilege of leading my mom to Christ after I came to the Lord in high school. Yet as I look back, my mother's smile and decorations and gift-giving and meal-preparation were the heart and soul of Christmas in our home. I cannot think of Christmas without thinking of my mother's smile—and I can't wait to see that smile again.

What is your favorite part of waking up on Christmas morning?

As a child, it was the first waking realization that it was Christmas, which was the best day of the year, even in our nonchristian family. My first move was to jump up and look out my bedroom window to see if it had snowed last night. Usually not, but several memorable times it did. After the snow-check, my brother Lance and I would run to our stockings hung by mom in the living room. I would open the contents slowly, including the ever-present Whitman's Samplers, not wanting it to end.

We got the big presents on Christmas Eve, but there was a special joy in the little treasures wrapped up in the stockings. I didn't understand then that these little gifts represented the greatest gift ever given—God's Son. Now, as an adult, a father, and recently a grandfather, I feel those same childlike feelings, a warmth and anticipation. But what I feel now on Christmas that I didn't many years ago is anticipation for a New



Earth, without sin and curse and suffering—a redeemed earth where I will live and work and play and worship and serve with Christian family and friends, and countless new friends besides.

I feel a spirit of adventure not just for the passing joys of Christmas, but for an eternal Christmas, a great story where—as C. S. Lewis put it at the end of the *Chronicles of Narnia*—every chapter will be better than the one before.

What is your favorite Christmas carol or secular Christmas song? Why?

When I was a kid I liked "Silent Night," even though I didn't understand the meaning. Now my favorite is "Joy to the World," because as my wife pointed out to me years ago, it's the Christmas song that looks forward to Christ's return and the New Earth. "He rules the world with truth and grace." That's what my heart longs for. "No more let sins and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground; he comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found." Christ's redemptive work will restore the earth to what God originally intended. Everything touched by the curse will be renewed and transformed into something great. "Joy to the World"—by the power of the risen Christ, the old world will be transformed into the new!

How has Christmas changed for you over the years?

The radical change was when I, as a high-schooler, came to Christ. Suddenly I understood Christmas. In the 35 years since then I've come to understand the grace of Jesus more each year. When our daughters were little I saw a joy and delight in their eyes that was like what I had in my heart as a child, but it was much better, because they knew the Christ of Christmas. Today they and their husbands walk with Jesus and this year their children will be experiencing their first post-natal Christmas. They'll begin some of their own traditions, and perhaps carry on some of ours. Christmas is about giving—and in the giving we gain so much, for we draw near to Christ, the ultimate giver. As Jesus said, it really "is more blessed to give than to receive."

I feel a spirit of adventure not just for the passing joys of Christmas, but for an eternal Christmas.

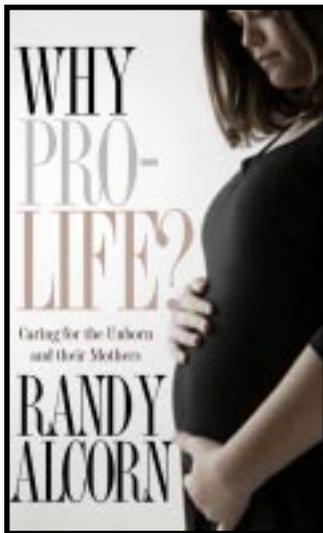
What is the deepest prayer of your heart this Christmas?

That people would understand that Jesus is the person they were made by and made for. That they would understand that He loved them enough to go to the cross for them and pay the price for their sins so that they could live forever with Him on the New Earth, the eternal Heaven.

There's a true story of a Christ-loving man who lay dying. His son asked, "Dad, how do you feel?"

His father replied: "Son, I feel like a little boy on Christmas Eve."

Christmas is coming. We live our lives between the first Christmas and the second. We look back to that first Christmas and the life of Jesus on the earth for some 33 years—but we look forward to the Christmas in which the resurrected Christ will return and we, his resurrected people, will live with him forever on the New Earth. And right when we think "It doesn't get any better than this"....it will!



Randy Alcorn Helps Readers Root Their Beliefs About Abortion in Reality

Abortion is a hot topic, ranking number one among issues people feel strongly about. Everyone is affected by abortion, including Christians. Those calling themselves Protestant or Catholic account for two-thirds of U.S. abortions; those calling themselves "born again" account for 18%.

Finally, a book has been written that presents the facts about abortion with grace and compassion, helping readers to root their beliefs in reality, not bumper-sticker slogans. *Why ProLife?*, by Randy Alcorn, is written mainly for fence-straddlers and professing pro-lifers, but also with pro-choicers in mind. *Why ProLife?* addresses the questions central to the abortion debate in a concise, straightforward, and non-abrasive manner.

Although many people will bring to the book their assumptions and impressions about abortion, they will not be grounded in science and logic. Many are "pro-life" because their religious leaders say they should be; many are "pro-choice" because it is the position that saturates popular media, and it sounds so positive and tolerant. In *Why ProLife?*, Randy Alcorn encourages all readers to reevaluate their positions and base their beliefs on factual evidence.

Why ProLife? asks and answers critical questions central to the abortion debate, including:

- Is the unborn really a human being?
- Is the unborn part of her mother's body?
- What do the new ultrasound technologies tell us?
- Is abortion necessary to ensure equal rights for women?
- Is it unfair to expect a pregnant woman to have an unwanted child?
- Does abortion affect a woman's physical and mental health?
- What about abortion in the "hard cases"?
- Is adoption really a viable alternative?

Individuals, churches and organizations are offered many practical suggestions to intelligently and graciously act in the interests of both women and children.

For a limited time, this book is available at an extreme discount to churches and ministries. It's a perfect give-away for The Sanctity of Human Life Sunday. Contact EPM at 503-663-6481 or info@epm.org for more information on these discounts. For single copies, the book is available for \$7.70 (30% discount).

Why ProLife?
asks and
answers critical
questions
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abortion debate

Volunteers needed:

EPM has periodic projects which can be done from home, but require internet savvy. If you have some interest and ability in this area, please contact Kathy Norquist at Kathy@epm.org



Out of the Cold: *Christianity Brings Hope to Cambodia* By Charles Colson

For nearly thirty years, the phrase *killing fields* was synonymous with *Cambodia*. Between 1975 and 1979, the communist Khmer Rouge killed at least one million Cambodians in their attempt to reinvent their society.

The killing ended only with the Vietnamese invasion which drove the Khmer Rouge out of power and into the jungle. Now, some of them have re-emerged, bearing not guns, but Bibles, a reminder of how the Gospel can succeed where man cannot.

The attempt to eliminate religion was at the heart of the killing fields. For Khmer Rouge leader Pol Pot, religion was superstition and an impediment to his plans for a better Cambodia.

If Pol Pot were alive today, he would be shocked to read the headline in a recent edition of London's *Guardian* newspaper: "Khmer Rouge Embraces Jesus." According to the story, "at least two thousand" former Khmer Rouge soldiers "now worship Jesus."

The town of Pailin in southwestern Cambodia is the center of this movement. As one pastor told the *Guardian*, 70 percent of the converts there are former Khmer Rouge. Many of them have testimonies similar to Thao Tanh. He said that "when I was a soldier I did bad things ... We were following orders and thought it was the right thing to do ... I read the Bible, and I know it will free me from the weight of the sins I have committed."

The effects of the conversions transcend the merely personal. They have played an important role in bringing the Khmer Rouge "in from the cold" to help promote national unity.

The people of Pailin understand what many here in the West don't: Religion, especially Christianity, is an important part of a good and just society.

An example of how Westerners are ignorant of this was a recent interview of comedian and talk-show host Bill Maher. Speaking on the Canadian Broadcasting Company, Maher described what he called a "real dividing line between people of intelligence" and "people who are religious." While he graciously acknowledged that some religious people, like poet T. S. Eliot, are intelligent, he called religion "a neurological disorder."

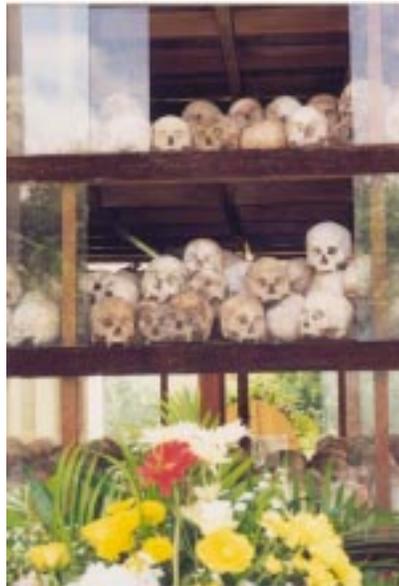
In Maher's estimation, the "cure" for "this crazy, illogical thing" Christians call faith is to "really get therapy or take a pill."

The problem with nonsense like this is that, as columnist James Lileks noted, Maher's words "resonate" with many of our elites. They might not put it as indelicately, but they also think that religion is something to be overcome on the way to their idea of a good society.

The Cambodians know better. They have experienced a real-world attempt to overcome religion which left millions dead in its wake. Now they are seeing how Christianity is helping to heal the wounds left by that attempt.

What's true in Cambodia is true elsewhere now and can be true elsewhere in the future. Pray for both the persecuted and the persecutors, that God's amazing grace will continue to touch and transform them both.

(Originally presented on "BreakPoint with Charles Colson," Commentary #041109 - 11/09/2004, Copyright © 2004 Prison Fellowship Ministries. Reprinted with permission.)



...at least two thousand former Khmer Rouge soldiers now worship Jesus.

Note from Randy Alcorn:

I took the two photos above while visiting Cambodia's Killing Fields several years ago, escorted by two believers who survived the Killing Fields. Hundreds of skulls are still visible, and the shocking stories, unforgettable. The next day, I spoke at a businessmen's luncheon where 50 people, including former Khmer Rouge, gave their lives to Christ. One of them was deputy director of the providence containing the Killing Fields, one of the few places where the JESUS Film was not allowed to be shown. As a result of his conversion, the next morning he issued permission for the film to be freely shown in the towns and cities surrounding the Killing Fields. God is at work!

Responses to EPM's Website: www.epm.org

Note: Our EPM website has new features placed on it each week. It's a wealth of biblical and practical resources, including audio files of some of Randy's messages and interviews. We also have a new video of Randy welcoming visitors to the website.

Thanks for the hard work that is obviously put into the EPM website (www.epm.org). This is my first time there, but it is without a doubt a very useful resource in my walk and help with my approach to some issues. J. H.

Hello, I just want to say thank you for your website and the encouraging, biblical information on it. I have had many questions about heaven for several years and have had little satisfaction in responses I receive about it. So many people (Christians) know so little about heaven and it has been my experience that many aren't all that interested.

I have been searching the Bible and have felt many of my questions had been answered but your book *In Light of Eternity* removed any doubts I had been having. Thank you for feeding me God's Word about heaven, it has helped me, encouraged me, and strengthened me! Knowing more about heaven and our rewards has strengthened my resolve to live a life of obedience to our Lord and more and more I understand in my heart that my real home is in heaven—my life here on this earth is a golden opportunity to live it for Jesus. Sincerely, D. E.

I want to thank you for your excellent website and the wealth of material here. It is a treasure of some of the best articles I have read.

God bless you for your ministry to the Church.
D. H.

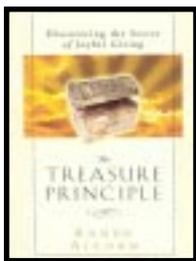
Hi, I am an every day visitor to your website. I am one of those people who have thirsted to see truth be held up to stand under. I work with teenagers and street kids, and now younger kids, and I must say that your books have made it into some of the most unlikely of places! We had a girl at the group home I worked in who used cocaine, and was a "working girl" at 16, hide the book *Deadline* in her purse to read between tricks. She was pregnant and got saved, while her social worker had an abortion scheduled for her the next day (they withheld her clothing allowance from her until she would have it). I sat with her for hours the night she made her decision, and showed her pictures of my brother and sister who were adopted. I told her that her baby, even if he was deformed by the drug use was a gift from God. Well, through that I was delighted to be her birth coach, and help her deliver a perfect baby boy (she did not use even one time after that while pregnant).

So far I have purchased 47 copies of *Deadline*, and have given them as gifts and at funerals to the family as a great witnessing tool. Your ministry is a breath of pure air. Thank you ever so much!

L. F., Canada



"...thank you for your website and the encouraging, biblical information on it."



The Six Keys to The Treasure Principle DVD

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This DVD (comprised of six 30-minute sessions) is perfect for churches, small groups, Bible studies, Sunday school classes, etc. You can order directly from DRC Films, 1-800-618-0914, or visit www.reelchristian.com.



The Care of Orphans: *Guiding Principles and Best Practices* By Daren Beck, ACTION Cambodia

The following is an excerpt from a paper that was written to define the guiding principles and corresponding best practices concerning the care of orphans under Action International Ministries. For a complete version of this paper, see our website, www.epm.org/articles/missions-care_orphans.html.

To care for orphans is denoted as pure religion before God and, therefore, the very act is God-honoring despite any hardships or suffering that result to God's servants.

The Global Issue

In our primary fields (Asia, Latin America and Africa) orphans comprise nearly 8% of the population under age 17. India had 35 million orphans in 2003, and 3.7 million new orphans were added in 2004. In Zambia orphans comprise a staggering 19% of the population under the age of 17 are orphans! Brazil added 470,000 new orphans in 2004 and they will be added to the 4.3 million that have already been identified. Poverty, civil unrest, war, and the AIDS pandemic are dealing a crushing blow to the current generation of children. There is no question as to whether we should engage in the care of orphans, but we seek to understand how God might be honored in our actions.

The Role of ACTION

The mission of ACTION is to see the Great Commission and the Great Commandment of the Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled. We cooperate with churches and other Christian organizations to present Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord (evangelism); assist Christians in their submission to Christ and their growth in the Church (discipleship); and minister in the name of Christ to the whole person, especially the poor, as in Matthew 25:31-46 (development).

We believe that the care of orphans is fundamental to God's plan for man and, as followers of Christ, we must actively engage in identifying those practices which are best and seek to implement them for the sake of those in need. Action International Ministries has taken up the banner of orphan care and advocacy around the world. We desire to stimulate one another in our current work, and exhort others to press on in this most needful ministry.



The Biblical Mandate

Any philosophical question becomes mere speculation without an agreed-upon foundational body of truth. We affirm that the Word of God serves as the Body of Truth for all discussion, is inerrant and infallible, and must be faithfully applied to all questions of faith and practice. Therefore, we believe that examining the Biblical mandate in regard to the care of orphans is of paramount importance. The Bible mandate specific to the care of orphans is as follows:

- Orphans, like all men, are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27; 5:1).

- God takes special concern for the person and plight of orphans (Deuteronomy 10:18; Jeremiah 49:11; Psalm 146:9).

- The care and protection of orphans are commanded by Scripture and that command is binding upon the Church, which includes all Christians for all times (James 1:27; Exodus 22:21; Deuteronomy 24:17; Deuteronomy 24-26; Isaiah 1:17).

- The visitation of orphans is denoted as pure religion before God and therefore the very act is God-honoring despite any hardships or suffering that result (James 1:27).

- To care for orphans is denoted as pure religion before God and, therefore, the very act is God-honoring despite any hardships or suffering that result to God's servants (James 1:27).

- The neglect of orphans is an abomination before the Lord and Divine judgment is promised to those who neglect, abuse and/or exploit orphans (Exodus 22:21-23;

- Job 24:9; Deuteronomy 27:19; Jeremiah 5:28; Jeremiah 22:3; Zechariah 7:10; Malachi 3:5).

- Knowingly to disregard someone in need (including an orphan) constitutes unbelief and sin (James 2:14-17).

- We are required to defend the orphan and be his advocate (Isaiah 1:17).

- Justice is demanded on behalf of the orphan (Deuteronomy 10:17-22).

- Christ commands that children (including orphans) be allowed access to Himself (Mark 10:13-16; Matt 19:13-15; Luke 18:15-17).

- We recognize that God's adoption of His elect constitutes a "best-care" model for followers of

Christ (Ezekiel 16:3-6; Hosea 2:23; John 1:12-13, 11:52; Ephesians 1; Galatians 3:29; 4:5-6; Romans 8:15; 9:4, 24-26; II Corinthians 6:18; Hebrews 2:10; I John 3:1).

● The Biblical definition of 'orphan,' by implication, seems to be broader than some would allow today and should include those children who are neglected, abused, abandoned and/or exploited (Malachi 3:5; Exodus 22:21-23; Deuteronomy 24:17; James 1:27).

The Wycliffe Bible Commentary on James 1:27 supports this conclusion: "Since orphans and widows were not provided for in ancient society, they were typical examples of those needing help".

V. R. Vincent, Word Studies in the New Testament says regarding James 1:27, "Pure and undefiled religion demands *personal contact* with the world's sorrow: to *visit* the afflicted and to visit them *in their affliction.*"

Strong's Concordance suggests *bereaved, fatherless, and comfortless* as ideas inherent in the word "orphans" or "fatherless."

Guiding Principles & Best Practices for Orphan Care

The best care for orphans will be achieved through following principles and practices that are derived from the Biblical foundation:

1. Following God's revealed will in Scripture about the care of orphans.

2. Recognizing that orphans are made in the image of God and therefore purposing to care for them in a way that reflects the kind of love, concern, protection and nurture that is commensurate with one who bears the image of the Creator.

3. Promoting the Biblically defined family unit, the sanctity of marriage and the necessity of Biblical fidelity to the institution of the family.

4. Exhorting, encouraging and empowering the local expression of the body of Christ to be a catalyst for providing the best possible care on behalf of orphans.

5. Working with and through models of care that are thoroughly Biblical (opposed to humanistic/psychological/anthropological models).

6. Assisting God-ordained institutions—such as churches, families and schools—to be empowered as the primary means by which Biblical models of care are instituted.

7. Leading by example through individual acts of compassion, sacrifice, suffering, and service to orphans for the glory of God.



8. Advocating on behalf of and, when necessary, defending orphans against exploitation, neglect and abuse.

9. Determining that the gospel must be central to any model that is deemed best, which is to include close attention to the content of the gospel message, the clear declaration of that message, and a powerful demonstration of it.

10. Committing ourselves to the principles of Scripture in caring for orphans, being careful not to subject Scripture to the institutions of man when they are in conflict.

11. Embracing the fiscal realities of providing care that is determined to be best and most Christ-exalting.

12. Participating in models of care that mirror the love and care that God has for us.

Application of Biblical Principles within ACTION

It is beyond the scope of this paper to grapple fully with how specific models of care might be applied to the countless situations encountered by various individual ministries within ACTION around the world. It is certainly within our corporate wherewithal to commit ourselves to being involved in one of the most basic of Christian endeavors, namely, caring for orphans in the best possible manner.

Currently ACTION and/or our ministry partners care for and minister to orphans through a wide range of models which include the following:

- Advocacy and Representation.
- Church-Based Foster Care Programs.
- NGO-Run (Non-Governmental Organizations) Residential Care Facilities.
- Short-Term Foster Care Placement Homes.
- Long-Term Foster Care.
- Government-Directed Institutions.
- Family-Style Orphanages.
- Foster/Adoption Ministries.
- Community-Based Care Initiatives.
- Residential Care for Displaced Orphans.

These models of ministry are very different in concept and focus, yet they are in line with our organizational purpose of demonstrating Christ to those in need. Our vision and mission at ACTION dictate that all of our ministries focus on the supremacy of Christ, the proclamation of the gospel, and the nurture and growth of followers of Christ.



If you would like to give to this worthwhile ministry (James 1:27), you may write a check to:

Action International
P.O. Box 398
Mountlake Terrace, WA
98043-0398
425-775-4800
www.actionintl.org

(You may also give your contribution through EPM. 100% of designated contributions go directly to the ministry noted.)

Materialism, Man and Morality by Randy Alcorn



Materialism is an attempt to find meaning in a universe that has been stripped of meaning through the denial of its Creator.

Materialism treats the temporal as if it were eternal and the eternal as if it were nonexistent. It is the inevitable consequence of atheism or agnosticism and invariably leads to the elevation of things on the one hand and the depreciation of people on the other. If people are created by a purposeful God, only then do they have purpose and value.

If they are merely the product of time, blind chance, and impersonal evolutionary forces, there is no fundamental defense for the intrinsic value of a human being.

The materialist may say people are more important than things, but on what basis can he support such a contention? What makes a person more valuable than a dog, a tree, or even a rock? He is different from them only in degree, not in kind. On the other hand, if man is God's special creation, made in his own image, created to rule over the world, then he is different not merely in degree, but in kind, distinct from and superior to the material realm. This, in fact, is precisely what Scripture teaches about man (Gen. 1:27-30; Ps. 8:3-8).

But if we accept the prevailing belief, taught almost universally in the Western world, that man is simply one more rung on the endless evolutionary ladder, who is to say one rung is more valuable than the previous? On what basis is a man's life worth more than an animal's? Because he is more powerful or has a superior intellect? How does this differ from saying smart and strong people are worth more than retarded and weak people? Or that an intelligent chimpanzee is more valuable than a severely retarded child? Today, the same car is likely to have one bumper sticker saying, "Save the Whales," and another, "Abortion: A Woman's Right." Save the whales; kill the children!

In evolutionary terms, it is a very short step from believing the fit will survive over the unfit, to believing that they deserve to survive. The world has seen numerous examples of the outworking of this philosophy in our own century, most notably Hitler's Third Reich.

If there is no eternal, there is no soul. Our minds are not really minds, but the illusory product of the

brain, that pulsating piece of matter that is nothing more than a sophisticated thing. When our brains cease to function, it is not simply our body that dies; we die. In this framework, man's fate is no different than the animal's or the tree's or the rock's—so why should he be treated differently?

Materialism is an attempt to find meaning in a universe that has been stripped of meaning through the denial of its Creator. This is the heart and soul of materialism—it is not a random form of behavior but the logical conclusion of an incorrect theology. Materialism does not begin with a wrong view of things; it ends there. It begins with a wrong view of God, which produces a wrong view of man and a wrong view of things.

Only man is arrogant enough to suppose he can put God out of business by denying him. Once God is "dethroned," there is no line of defense for the value of every human being, therefore no line of defense for any values at all. If we think about it, it is totally predictable that a materialist culture will sanction abortion, infanticide, euthanasia, and every other form of God-playing imaginable. We should never be shocked at what a materialist does. He will do whatever he can do to serve his twisted philosophy of life. This is why technology is so dangerous in the hands of the materialist.

Increasingly we hear the issue of money raised in moral discussions. "Consider the expense to the taxpayer of unwanted children." "Do you realize what it does to everyone's health insurance premiums to provide care for hopelessly deformed infants and human vegetables?" "The Social Security system simply cannot sustain the numbers of elderly and infirm there will be by the end of the century."

No matter how they are phrased, such statements pave the way for the elimination of human life for financial reasons. This is already widely true of abortion, somewhat true of infanticide, and will increasingly be true of euthanasia of the elderly and helpless, the so-called noncontributors to the economy, the leeches of society. Many Americans were shocked some years ago when a congressman was quoted as saying the elderly and infirm had an obligation to unburden society by means of their voluntary euthanasia. Yet, given the premises of materialism, his comment was but a natural conclusion.

The most blatant forms of immorality, the most hideous violations of human dignity will inevitably



become commonplace in a materialistic society, provided only that they are cost-effective. After you cut through all the noble-sounding rhetoric, money, not God and not human worth, is the only bottom line consideration of materialism.

Materialism will inevitably produce the kind of society increasingly evident in America—a society of individualism, where people live parallel lives, not meaningfully intersecting with others. A society where independence is the only absolute, where self-interest is the only creed, where convenience and expediency and profitability are the only values. A society where people know the price of everything, but the value of nothing—where people have a great deal to live on, but very little to live for.

Loving Things, Using People

All this may sound like philosophy and sociology and ethics, but it is also extremely practical. The problem of materialism boils down to this: While God created us to love people and use things, the materialist loves things and uses people. He may deny this, but his philosophy of life insures that it will be true. Note the tendency to treat and target people as objects rather than subjects. For instance, the prevalent term “consumer” speaks not of a person, but an economic unit, of value to a company only as an object than can potentially contribute to its profits.

We have every reason to be alarmed about our country's materialism, but no reason whatsoever to be surprised by it. For our outer materialism is nothing

more nor less than the logical and inescapable extension of our inner capitulation to the philosophy of materialism.

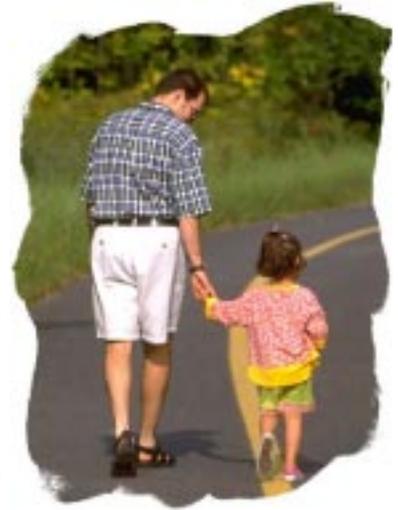
This is believed not only by the “bad apples” of society, not the abandoned street kids or reform school grads. They are “the best,” the product of the best homes and best schools in this country. They have believed and are living out what the educational system of our homes,

schools, media, and peers—sometimes, sadly, even our churches—has taught them. They are the product of a worldview without God and therefore without spiritual values. Since every person must value something, what other values could we expect from a generation of materialists than materialistic values? As a society, we are reaping exactly what we have sown.

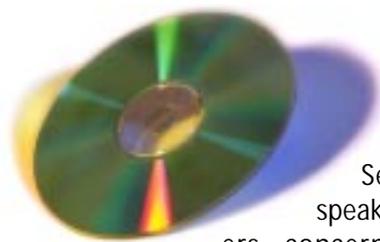
Materialism can never be corrected by high-sounding courses in ethics or the campaign speeches of politicians calling on us to restore the moral fiber of our nation. Moral fiber must come from somewhere. It must be cultivated in our education institutions, beginning with the home. Moral fiber cannot simply be grabbed out of the sky in the midst of a moral vacuum. Materialism can only be corrected by a different view of God. This in turn can only come from a belief in and study of the Scriptures, which tell us about God, and which alone give us the context to truly understand the critical God-related subjects of man, money, and possessions.

(For related subject matter, see Randy Alcorn's book *Money, Possessions and Eternity*, Revised, 2003.)

The most blatant forms of immorality, the most hideous violations of human dignity, will inevitably become commonplace in a materialistic society, provided only that they are cost-effective.



While God created us to love people and use things, the materialist loves things and uses people.



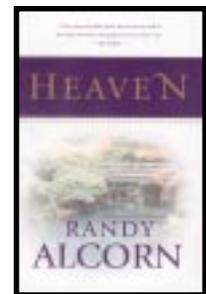
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...unwed Mary would have been the perfect candidate for a similar procedure.

Professor's Educational Tool Saves a Life by Phil deHaan

For almost three decades Calvin College professor Pete Tigchelaar has had a three-month-old fetus, encased in plastic, that he uses in his human biology classes.

He's always thought of the tiny fetus as a good educational tool. But he's not thought of it as a life-saver.

Last year, however, that changed when a student in one of his biology classes privately inquired if he still had it.

Intrigued, Tigchelaar said that he did and invited the young woman to his office for further conversation. There he asked why she was interested. She proceeded to tell him an amazing story, one that he now is sharing more widely as Christmas draws closer.

The young woman told Tigchelaar that a generation earlier her mother had been a student in one of Tigchelaar's biology classes. Unknown to Tigchelaar this student was three month's pregnant on a day he had shown the class the fetus with its tiny fingers, facial features, eyes, outline of a liver and other human features.

"She had already visited a pregnancy center," Tigchelaar recalls the young woman telling him, "and was told about the 'product of conception' and

'contents of the uterus' that she had within her. She was advised to have an abortion and had one scheduled for the following morning."

But after Tigchelaar's class she realized she had more within her than a "product of conception." And she cancelled her scheduled abortion, continued with her pregnancy and eventually delivered a healthy baby girl.

"I am that girl," the student then informed a stunned Tigchelaar. "Thanks for my life."

Tigchelaar, at the time, was amazed, speechless. He remembers in a halting voice telling the girl simply that she was beautiful.

"Even now," he says, "I can barely tell the story without breaking up."

Yet tell it he does. And for an important reason.

"In this season when we celebrate the birth of someone who came to give each of us eternal life," Tigchelaar says, "I am re-

minded that the unwed Mary would have been the perfect candidate for a similar procedure. I am thankful that her response was, 'I am the Lord's handmaid. Be it to me as you say!'"

(Originally printed in the Calvin News, Dec. 18, 2003, www.calvin.edu/news/releases/2003_04/christmas_story.htmnews.)



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It's Not In The Book! by Ruthanna Metzgar

As a professional singer, it was not unusual to be asked to sing for a wedding, but it was a bit unusual to sing for the wedding of a millionaire. I knew the wedding would be picture-perfect and was pleased to be able to participate, but when the invitation to the reception arrived I knew it would be something exceptional.

The reception was held on the top two floors of Seattle's Columbia Tower, the Northwest's tallest skyscraper, and it was even more wonderful than I imagined. There were waiters wearing snappy black tuxedos who offered luscious hor d'oeuvres and exotic beverages for the most discriminating tastes. The atmosphere was one of grace and sophistication.

After about an hour of merriment the bride and groom approached a beautiful glass and brass staircase that led to the top floor. A satin ribbon, which was draped across the bottom of the stairs, was cut and the announcement made that the wedding feast was about to begin. The bride and groom ascended the stairs and the guests followed. What a lavish event of which to be a part.

A gentleman with a lovely bound book greeted us as we reached the top of the stairs. "May I have your name please?" "I am Ruthanna Metzgar and this is my husband, Roy Metzgar," I replied. The gentleman searched the Ms. "I'm not finding it. Would you spell it please?" I spelled it slowly and clearly. After searching throughout the book the gentleman looked up and said, "I'm sorry, but your name is not here. Without your name in this book you cannot attend this banquet." "Oh, there must be some mistake," I replied. "I am the singer. I sang for this wedding!" The gentleman calmly answered, "It doesn't matter who you are or what you did, without your name in the book you cannot attend this banquet." As I looked around the room I thought briefly of running to the groom and trying to plead my case, but with a hundred guests on the stairs behind us and every place at the tables assigned according to the thoughtful choices of the bride and groom, I stood silent.

The gentleman with the book motioned to a waiter and said, "Show these people to the service elevator please." We followed the waiter past beautifully decorated tables laden with shrimp, whole smoked salmon, even gracefully carved ice sculptures. And adjacent to the banquet area was an orchestra, its members all dressed in dazzling white tuxedos, preparing to fill the room with glorious music.

We were led to the service elevator, stepped in, and the waiter himself pushed "G" for garage. My husband, thoughtfully, did not say a word, nor did I. As Roy drove out of the Columbia Tower garage, we both remained silent.

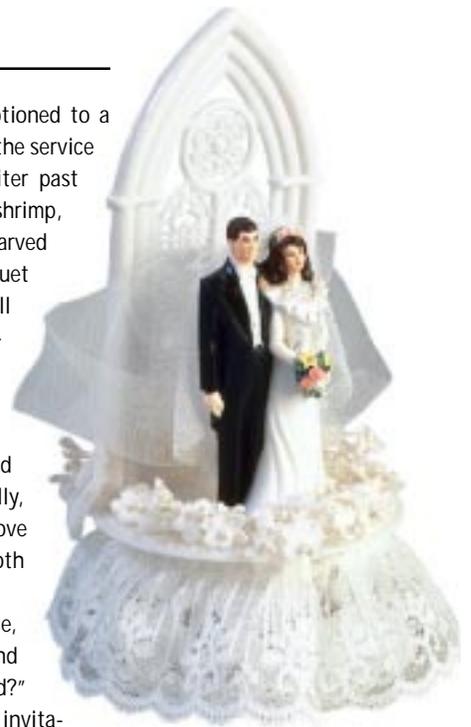
After driving several miles in silence, Roy reached over and gently put his hand on my arm. "Sweetheart, what happened?"

And then I remembered: "When the invitation arrived for the reception I was very busy and I never bothered to return the RSVP. Besides, I was the singer, surely I could go to the reception without returning the RSVP!"

As we drove on I began to weep. I was not weeping because I had just missed the most lavish banquet of my life, but I was weeping because suddenly I knew what it will be like someday for people as they stand before the entrance of heaven: People who were too busy to respond to Christ's invitation to His heavenly banquet. People who assumed that the good things they had done, even perfect church attendance or singing in the choir, would be enough to gain entry to heaven. People who will look for their name in the Book...in the Lamb's Book of Life and not find it there. People who did not have time to respond to Christ's gracious invitation to have their sins forgiven and accept Him into their hearts.

And then I wept again because I was so grateful that I had, many years earlier, received Christ as my personal Savior and can be confident that my name *is* written in the most important book of all: The Lamb's Book of Life. Is Yours?

*(Copyright Ruthanna Metzgar,
excerpted in Heaven, by Randy Alcorn.)*



"It doesn't matter who you are or what you did, without your name in the book you cannot attend this banquet."



Only the humble are completely sane, for they are the only ones who see clearly their own size and limitations.

A. W. Tozer on Failure and Success...

True Greatness

Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave. *Matthew 20:26-27*

The essence of His teaching is that true greatness lies in character, not in ability or position. Men in their blindness had always thought that superior talents made a man great, and so the vast majority believe today. To be endowed with unusual abilities in the field of art or literature or music or statecraft, for instance, is thought to be in itself an evidence of greatness, and the man thus endowed is hailed as a great man. Christ taught, and by His life demonstrated, that greatness lies deeper.

While a few philosophers and religionists of pre-Christian times had seen the fallacy in man's idea of greatness and had exposed it, it was Christ who located true greatness and showed how it could be attained. 'Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.' It is that simple and that easy—and that difficult.

Born After Midnight, 50

Our Dowry of Everlastingness

As for man, his days are like grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourishes. For the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more. But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children's children. *Psalms 103:15-17*

We who follow Christ are men and women of eternity. We must put no confidence in the passing scenes of the disappearing world. We must resist every attempt of Satan to palm off upon us the values that belong to mortality. Nothing less than forever is long enough for us.

We view with amused sadness the frenetic scramble of the world to gain a brief moment in the sun. 'The book of the month,' for instance, has a strange

sound to one who has dwelt with God and taken his values from the Ancient of Days. 'The man of the year' cannot impress those men and women who are making their plans for that long eternity when days and years have passed away and time is no more.

The church must claim again her ancient dowry of everlastingness.

She must begin again to deal with ages and millenniums rather than with days and years. She must not count numbers but test foundations. She must work for permanence rather than for appearance.

Her children must seek those enduring things that have been touched with immortality. The shallow brook of popular religion chatters on its nervous way and thinks the ocean too quiet and dull because it lies deep in its mighty bed and is unaffected by the latest shower.

The Next Chapter After the Last, 9

The Small and the Great

Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." 1 Peter 5:5

Some time ago we heard a short address by a young preacher during which he quoted the following, "If you are too big for a little place, you are too little for a big place."

It is an odd rule of the kingdom of God that when we try to get big, we always get smaller by the moment. God is jealous of His glory and will not allow anyone to share it with Him. The effort to appear great will bring the displeasure of God upon us and effectively prevent us from achieving the greatness after which we pant.

Humility pleases God wherever it is found, and the humble person will have God for his or her friend and helper always. Only the humble are completely sane, for they are the only ones who see clearly their own size and limitations. Egotists see things out of focus. To themselves they are large and God is correspondingly small, and that is a kind of moral insanity.

This World: Playground or Battleground? 34

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