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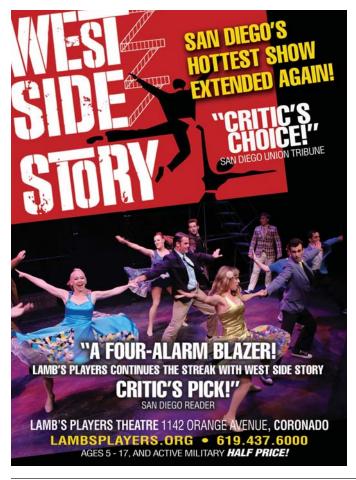






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DEAN NELSON

Married to selflessness

August is the month of my wedding anniversary, and I was reminded recently of one of the conflicts we had within the first couple of years of our life together.

We were both in jobs that we didn't like, living in a city that we didn't like. When a friend called about a job opportunity that would employ both my wife and me, I couldn't believe it. The arrangement sounded perfect. I couldn't wait to tell her.

But when I told her about it, she thought it sounded terrible.

What was wrong with her, I wondered?

We had a real dilemma. Who was right?

I was absolutely convinced that this was the answer to my prayers of needing an escape from a rapidly deteriorating situation at work. She was equally convinced that this was the kind of assignment that would make her miserable. It might be a good match for my gifts, but it wasn't for hers, she said. We were stuck.

We decided to take a few days to think and pray about it, and ask for direction from God. At first I prayed that my wife would see the light and stop being so stubborn and see things the right way (which, of course, was "my way"). I can't tell you how she prayed.

Eventually, my prayer shifted a little. It was no longer a prayer of pleading that she would give in, but it became a prayer of direction for what would be the best thing for the two of us. The prayer evolved into what would make the two of us the best people, and what would be best for our marriage?

Within a few days my priority shifted from what would be best for me, to what would be best for her and for us. I felt that God was showing me that I was being selfish. I needed to put my wife

first. Taking this new opportunity was not in her best interests. She didn't think it was right. I needed to honor that and keep looking for something where both of us had confidence.

We had a meeting at our kitchen table. She went first.

"God showed me that I was putting my own priorities first," she began. "I was being selfish. I want God to use vou in the best way possible, and if that means I need to set my own wishes aside, I am willing to do that. I think we should take the new iob."

At first I was confused. What? She pretty much stole everything I was about to say. Is it plagiarism if someone something as her own words if you were about to say the same thing? Eventually I said virtually the same thing she had said to me, which made me sound lame, because she had already pretty much said it. So we had a new dilemma. Now what do we do?

We didn't go. And that was the right decision. I recommended someone else for the job, and it was perfect for him and his wife.

Frederick Buechner said that "A mar-

riage made in Heaven is one where a man

and a woman become more richly themselves together than the chances are either of them could ever have managed to become alone. When Jesus changed the water into wine at the wedding in Cana, perhaps it was a way of saying more or less the same thing."

God became human to make his love more tangible. Marriage continues that incarnation. Marriage mirrors Christ's selfless love. Family life in general is a series of small surrenders that move us to become advocates for one another, where we take delight in letting someone else's life be more important than our own. As author Anne Lamott says, married

life is one spouse secretly thinking he or she got the better deal.

I know I did.



Dean Nelson directs the journalism program at Point Loma Nazarene University in San Diego. His book about seeing God in everyday life is "God Hides in Plain Sight:

How to See the Sacred in a Chaotic World."





BORN DEAD

Baby defies odds after traumatic delivery

story by LORI ARNOLD photos by HEATHER K. PHOTOGRAPHY

eather Hoffman was just hours from delivering her fourth child. She was nesting at home. Her husband Neil was vacuuming and doing some other final cleaning chores while they waited Heather's progression of labor, along with their midwife and doula.

Just as Heather had seen in a vision six years earlier, the house was filled with laughter.

"I was drinking a green smoothie and walking laps in the hallway," she said. "I sensed the Holy Spirit in the sweetness of every moment. I actually kept joking that it seemed too fun to be real labor!"

Three hours later, Heather had nearly advanced to the pushing phase. The laughter stopped.

"There was intense pain," the El Cajon resident said. "I remember hearing 'popping.' It literally felt like my insides were ripping apart."

The midwife immediately recognized the signs. Her patient's uterus had ruptured. The baby's heart rate had dropped.

Neil called 9-1-1.



"Somehow in the chaos I was in a supernaturally peaceful state," Heather said. "I had my eyes closed, expressionless, and emotionless on the bed. I had no idea how I was holding it together so well. I was in horrible pain and knew exactly what was going on and how bad it could be, but the best way I can describe it is I felt like I wasn't really there."

At the hospital she was rushed into emergency surgery for a C-section.

"I remember waking up in pain, asking for Ryden," she said. "No one would answer me completely because I learned later that he was born dead. When I read his discharge summary later on, it said he was born gray and floppy. No heartbeat. No breath. They got his heart going but had to put a ventilator in to get him breathing."

Doctors eventually broke the news.

"Ryden went 43 minutes without sufficient oxygen and suffered severely massive brain damage," his mother said, adding that her newborn was transferred to another hospital where he could get the specialized critical care treatment he needed.

Despite her ruptured uterus, Heather was released from the hospital less than 24 hours after the ordeal. Doctors attributed her quick recovery to Ryden.

"The surgeon told us that it seemed one of the only reasons I did not die or bleed out was because, when he cut me open, Ryden's head was completely blocking the tear," she said.

The couple was told that even though she was minutes away from delivery when her uterus ruptured, "Ryden reversed and was positioned in such a way that literally saved my life."

A parent's nightmare

After her own release from the hospital, Heather headed across town to see the son who saved her life.

"Seeing Ryden completely lifeless in the NICU, hooked up to too many machines to count, then having to come home to a house with an empty crib, a dresser filled with pre-washed newborn clothes, and an oh-so-still baby swing with new batteries in it, was the worst, most painful night of my entire life," she said.

Doctors offered little hope for Ryden's survival. Scans showed catastrophic brain damage and his body language mirrored the diagnosis. He couldn't breath on his own, he didn't move or respond to pain, he had no reflexes and wouldn't gag or swallow. His eyes remained open for hours without blinking.

"Ryden was a dead baby with a heart beat," his mother said. "Picturing myself boxing up his unused newborn clothes, tearing apart the crib we built for him, a tiny casket, it all hurt so deep it was painful to breathe."

Even with the grief and uncertainty, Heather said they both felt tremendous peace, a supernatural peace, throughout their journey, much like she had during the traumatic delivery at home. She also clung to the promises of Ephesians 6:10, "Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might."

"It was such a relief not needing to muster up my own strength to face each day and all its uncertainties, I needed only to rely on His strength, and His grace ... His power really was perfected in my weakness," she said.

"There would be times I'd be at home doing dishes or laundry, and suddenly the Presence of God would come into that room so thick I'd be unable to stand. I'd fall on my knees crying and worshiping, so grateful He was bearing this with us."

The environment at the hospital was the same. Nurses told the Hoffmans that they requested assignment to Ryden's room because there was a presence there that was not felt anywhere else in the hospital.

Expecting victory

Early on, the Hoffmans said they saw one of two victories for Ryden.

"The first victory being that we get a miracle and Ryden can come home and live life with the ability to grow in his love and knowledge of the Lord," his father, the college pastor at Foothills Christian Church in El Cajon, said in a blog post on Facebook. "The second victory being that he gets to go Home to be with his Heavenly Father where there is no pain, suffering, or damaged body or brain. We trust God for whatever victory He wants to bring."

That trust was tested several weeks after Ryden's birth after more scans showed the newborn to be in a vegetative state.

"We decided to put Ryden in God's hands, literally, and let Him decide which victory we were going to have," Heather said.

So Neil and Heather gathered their immediate family as they prepared to take Ryden off of life support. Ryden's older brothers, Gavin, 6, Josiah, 4, and Landon, 3, took turns holding their baby sibling, each giving him a special



toy they had picked out. In the background, a photographer friend snapped photos of Ryden, who, for the first time since his birth, was no longer hooked up to tubes.

"We had worship music playing," Heather said. "Neil prayed a prayer of dedication and worship, and as the Holy Spirit engulfed the room, they took the ventilator out and placed my frail, dying son in my arms. Neil cradled his arms around me and Ryden as we wept. I looked at my baby's lifeless, tiny face completely free from tubes and machines as he barely wheezed, and told him, 'You can go. You can go, Ryden. We'll see you again. Aren't those gates pretty?'

"We cried, rocked him, I sang worship songs to him, and his wheezing ever

so very slowly, turning into breathing. After a few minutes, for the first time, Ryden was breathing on his own. God literally breathed the breath of life into him. Hours later we were still holding this precious baby, trying to soak in what was happening."

As the music played in the background, Heather said two phrases from back-toback songs merged together into one bold promise she claimed that day: Death is swallowed up in victory. So let Hope rise.

"And that's exactly what happened," she said.

Home with hospice

After defying doctors by willing to live, a still-frail Ryden was sent home with hospice care and the Hoffmans adjusted their schedule to accommodate Ryden's need for round-the-clock attention.

"We dared to invest in loving him, knowing it would hurt even worse if and when he died," Heather said. "Those first couple weeks home were very hard and emotional. Within a couple weeks of bringing our baby home to die, he started to live."

Again defying the predictions of doctors, Ryden learned how to gag and swallow. He began moving his limbs and reaching other milestones that his physicians believed he would never do.

An MRI when he was six months old stunned his mom and dad-and the neurosurgeons.

"The results showed that the struc-

ture of his brain was completely there in its entirety," his ecstatic mom said. "There was no shrinkage, no water, no atrophy! It was a miracle!"

A week later, though, Ryden developed Infantile Spasms, which resulted in as many as 20 spasms a day and reversed much of the progress their son had made.

"I refused to feel hopeless," Heather said. "I remember telling my friends that the wonderful week before he started having spasms when we enjoyed his interactions with us so thoroughly, I believe were to give us hope to get us through this massive setback; to help us remember and claim the son we were go-





Answering the

eil Hoffman was home caring for his three oldest sons, Gavin, 5, Josiah, 3, and Landon, 2, while his wife Heather was at the hospital with their newborn Ryden. Dad had just put his children to bed when he found himself on the kitchen floor.

"I remember breaking down and crying out to God saying, 'Why are you allowing this to happen?" he said. "I love you God. Nothing is going to change my love for you. Nothing will change. You have stolen my heart."

He begged God for an explanation on why Ryden was facing catastrophic brain damage after his mother's uterus ruptured during the home birth. The grieving Dad wanted to understand the whys so that he could be strong for his family.

At that moment, a text arrived from friend.

"It wasn't just an encouraging text, I'm telling you it was the very voice of God that hit my heart," Neil said. "It read, 'The hardest part about surrendering is our need to understand, but you can't fully surrender until you say, 'God, I don't need to understand.'"

Neil's mind immediately flashed to Isaiah 55:9:

As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

After receiving the text, Neil said he realized that God was asking him to "Trust in me and not in the ways I work, not in what you expect me to do, because I am not limited in what you expect me to do. I have much better things."

"When I did that all of a sudden my eyes were open. Fear and worry and brokenness started breaking off of me and I was able to see things so different."

Heather had her own encounter with the Lord after asking Him what her son would have been like without brain damage?

"What would his personality have been like?" she asked her maker.

"The Lord spoke to me firmly and strongly, yet lovingly, saying, 'Don't you, the clay, say to me, the Potter, "Why did You make this vessel this way?" I make my vessels with a purpose. So don't you look around at all these other vessels and say, "Why isn't mine like that?" Because this one has a different purpose. This boy, with this body and this mind, was created to do exactly what I want him to do. That's why he is this way.'

"From that moment on I experienced a freedom I've never known before. We absolutely believe there never was any other Ryden Joshua, that this is the life that our sovereign, perfect God had purposed this precious boy to live."

ing to have again."

The day they sent out an urgent plea for prayers on Facebook, the spasms ceased.

Birthday milestone

In May, the Hoffmans hosted a celebration gathering at the church to mark Ryden's first birthday, a milestone doctors never thought the family would see. Heather and Neil used the time to thank those who served the family through prayer and other practical ways. The family continues to celebrate the strength of their son while monitoring his many developmental achievements.

"Ryden loves to play," his mom said. "He has favorite toys and people. He loves to coo at us and he giggles at his brothers. His favorite song is 'Jesus Loves Me.' He's a pro at rolling over. He thinks it's funny when we brush our teeth. He loves baths and car rides and hates cold wipes.

"He has forms of cerebral palsy. He doesn't eat like he's supposed to, crawl, walk, or talk, but we believe he will. Our therapists say it seems like he'll be able to do pretty much everything other little boys do."

Looking forward

Although the extent of Ryden's long-term disabilities is not yet clear, his parents are confident that he will continue to make strides, after asking the Lord that if their son was going to live that God would at least allow him to grow in love and the knowledge of the Lord.

"Without that we didn't see 'abundant life' as possible," Heather said. "We believe he'll have disabilities, but we don't see them as some horrible thing we're stuck with and just have to get through. We see them as a platform to make him a little more visible so that Christ shines

"We dared to invest in loving him, knowing it would hurt even worse if and when he died."

out all the more because we believe we're still in the beginning stages of Ryden's healing."

In fact, she's had a vision of collegeaged Ryden limping across a church stage to give his testimony. He's holding a microphone while pictures of him in the hospital NICU flash on screens behind him. He tells the crowd, "My name is Ryden Joshua Hoffman. I was born dead, and this is my story."

"People can call that living in denial, but I'm going to call it walking by faith, because I believe that's how God's called me to live," Ryden's mom said. "And I'd way rather get out of the boat and walk on water, even just for a little bit before sinking and crying out to Jesus to save me, as opposed to sitting in the boat not having any faith to do anything at all."

Her husband agreed.

"I don't see a poor life that could

have been," he said. "What Heather and I see is God moving through someone so strong. We see a little boy that has done more for the Kingdom of God than many people do their entire life."

He said even in the early days of his son's life, Ryden was already driving people young and old around the globe to drop to their knees in prayer.

"Ryden is teaching little kids how to pray," he said.

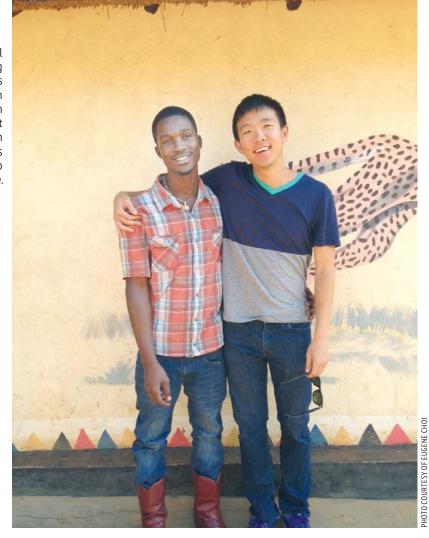


FROM SPONSORSHIP TO FRIENDSHIP

Children of the Nations partners with nationals in several countries to provide holistic, Christ-centered care for orphaned and destitute children, enabling them to create positive and lasting change in their nations. Here two sponsored children in Uganda watch a soccer game from a distance.



Eugene Choi, right, and Richard Jaziwell enjoy spending time together during Choi's latest trip to Malawi earlier this summer. Six years ago, Choi, then 20, began sponsoring Jaziwell as part of the Children of the Nation sponsorship program. Just three years apart in age, the young men have become close friends and Choi's continuing support has enabled Jaziwell to attend a technical college to learn a trade.



A young man's investment in a Malawi teenager reaps dividends for both

by LORI ARNOLD

ugene Choi grew up as many American children, hitching his ▲ faith in Jesus to his parents: a spiritual umbilical cord of sorts.

"I thought I was a Christian and never sinned because of my parent's association with the church," Choi, 26, said.

But unlike many of his peers a near tragedy drew him to God in a deeply personal way before he even hit pu-

"I was diagnosed with a brain tumor when I was 12, and I fully understood God's grace and mercy then. Since then it's been an ongoing process of surrendering my life to God and having a more intimate and authentic relationship with Jesus."

But along the way to adulthood Choi's spiritual mountaintop journey descended toward the valley.

"I felt my faith getting stagnant and wasn't happy with my relationship with God," said Choi, who was healed from his childhood cancer.

He began searching for ways to shake up the malaise so he signed up for a missions trip to Africa where Flood, his church, was working in partnership with Children of the Nations, a sponsorship organization that serves underprivileged children with the vision that those who are sponsored with go on to transform their communities.

"I was always curious about that," he said. "A bold leap of faith later, I decided to look into going on a missions trip to Malawi."

While doing ministry in Malawi, Choi's heart was drawn to shy teenager named Richard Jaziwell, who at 17 was on the cusp of adulthood but who, as an orphan, had no support system.

"My mother died of a brain tumor and my father suffered from internal cuts," Jaziwell said of their deaths, which happened while he was still a young boy. After his parents' deaths he also drifted away from his three brothers.

During Choi's trip, Richard helped with translation for the American team and also taught the foreigners an African tribal dance.

"He was shy, but he was trying to welcome us in the best way possible and I knew that being an orphan and in high school, he needed the sponsorship more than the younger kids," said

Choi, a wholesaler for a small investment firm. "All I knew was that he was an orphan in need, trying to make it to school."

So Choi committed to sponsoring Jaziwell and returned to Malawi nearly every year since his inaugural 2009 trip.

"We grew up together," Choi said.

The money Choi provided, coupled with that from several other sponsors, allowed Jaziwell to attend a technical college to be trained as an auto mechanic.

'When I first meet Eugene I didn't know what God had instilled in him and I never thought about him sponsoring me," Jaziwell said in an email interview from the Kasungu district, where he lives. "I took him as a friend. I interpreted his words to communicate to the young, He also insisted to learning an African dance."

Finding his faith

Now 23, Jaziwell said he's grateful for the holistic approach Children of the Nations uses to transform the lives of recipient children.

"Eugene and the other sponsors that I have, have transformed my life in many



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Left: Jaziwell and Choi enjoy ice cream cones during a 2010 visit by Choi, who has visited his friend in Malawi almost every year since his sponsorship began in 2009.

Below: A Children of the Nations-sponsored child performs some daily chores in Malawi.

ways," he said. "I now know God as a universal Savior and with His love I have grown spiritually. They have been offering me standard food, clothes and shelter. They have been paying for my education from high school."

He does admit, however, that his gratitude sometimes teeters on guilt as he considers how much he's been blessed.

"Sometimes I question myself why I was chosen among my family to be part of Children of the Nations, where they took and still take me as their biological son, with the provision of standard basic needs. This makes me realize God's love and care for me and it's all for His Glory and purpose."

Although their initial contact was birthed in a formal sponsorship, over the years the pair has developed a strong bond, with Jaziwell serving as Choi's interpreter when he's in the country.

"Little by little Richard opened up to me as we continued to chat," Choi said. "Over the past couple of years as we've met and spent time together, he would be more open and we'd developed a friendship now where we joke and banter with each other.

"We talk in depth about what God is doing in his life and we're able to connect on a deeper level, seeing as how we're kind of the same age. We talk about our hopes and dreams and I treat him like a younger brother."

Loving others

Through the example set by Choi, Jaziwell has cultivated his own abiding faith.

"I have learned of love to others by sharing (what) God has blessed us with," Jaziwell said. "He really loves and cares for us, although we fall short of His glory minute to minute of our stay on Earth."

Choi said he couldn't help but notice how Jaziwell has developed into a natural leader who is now "paying it forward."

"Seeing Richard go from not know-

PHOTO COURTESY OF CHILDREN OF THE NATIC

AT A GLANCE





CHILDREN OF THE NATIONS

ing any English and being really shy to serving as my translator and being fully fluent in English was a humbling reminder that Children of the Nations is doing some good Kingdom work," he said. "Seeing him graduate high school, attend college and share with me his hopes and dreams, something that he hadn't had a couple of years ago, that was an aha moment for me.

"It's absolutely incredible to see the work that God's done in this guy's life from being extremely shy to stepping up to the plate and not only translating for me in recent trips while I minister to the younger kids, but taking on a leadership role in the village for the younger kids as well."

The San Diegan said the learning curve has also bounced back on himself.

"I've learned so much more from Richard and the ways he's honoring and glorifying God than I think he has from me," Choi said. "The benefit has been all mine and it's really hard to put a price tag on how God's blessed me through my relationship with Richard.

"God is big and alive and working in ordinary people to do some pretty extraordinary things."



It's high school graduation day this past June for COTN-sponsored students in Malawi.

What: Children of the Nations was founded 20 years ago by a

> Washington state couple who, after traveling to Africa, were compelled to provide assistance to orphans and refugee

children they met in the country.

Who: Chris Clark, a fifth-generation missionary who was raised in

> Africa where his parents served as missionaries, and his wife, Debbie, a teacher, quit their positions with Youth for Christ to

establish the child sponsorship ministry.

Where: Children of the Nations now serves the United States,

Dominican Republic, Sierra Leone, Malawi, Uganda and Haiti.

Through funding primarily from child sponsorships and How:

> individual donations, Children of the Nations operates homes, schools, farms, skill centers, clinics, and village feeding centers in an effort to provide quality care for children. Each country office is established with an individual mission-based, nonprofit organization and is recognized among reputable

Christian charities.

Although originally launched as an outreach to "rescue" destitute children, the program now seeks to create a "family" for each child in the program. The needs of each child are met through numerous sponsors. In addition to providing monthly support of at least \$32, sponsors may write letters to their child and visit through missions trips they call Venture Trips.

Accountability: Local governing boards oversee local ministry staff in each

country. Country directors and management committees work closely with staff to provide the best for participating

children.

Venture trips: Hundreds of individuals from churches, specialty groups, and

youth programs, many of them child sponsors, visit ministry sites to offer support and encouragement, staying from one

week to up to a year.

The numbers: Children of the Nations started in 1995 with a monthly budget

of \$300. Today, the ministry has 400 U.S. and international staff, tens of thousands of volunteers, and an annual budget of

more than \$7 million.

Information: www.cotni.org

In the early decades of the 20th century, the "fire-and-brimstone" preacher Billy Sunday preached to millions as America's most celebrated and influential evangelist of his day.

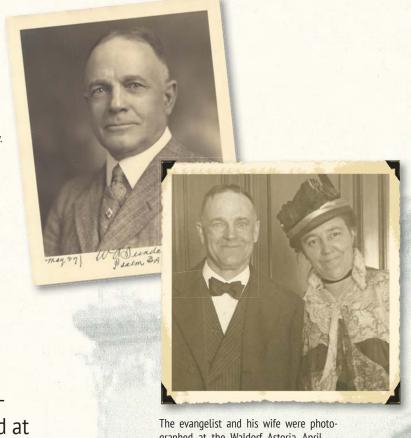
Balboa Park Centennial

THE PREACHER IN THE PARK

100 years ago ballplayer-turnedevangelist Billy Sunday preached at the Organ Pavilion in Balboa Park

by JAMES D. SMITH III

his year marks the centennial of San Diego's 1915 Panama-California Exposition, which celebrated not only the completion of the Panama Canal, but also the city of San Diego as the first American port of call, early 20th century innovations and the beauty of Spanish culture. Businessman John D. Spreckels contributed the magnificent Organ Pavilion, and a committee invited renowned speakers. Between two U.S. presidents—Teddy Roosevelt on July 27 and William Howard Taft on Sept. 16—was August's keynote guest, ballplayer-turned-evangelist "Billy" Sunday.



graphed at the Waldorf Astoria, April 12, 1916, on the occasion of their shopping trip to New York from Peterson, N.J. where they were conducting a revival.

William Ashley Sunday (1862-1935) was the last of three sons born to William and Mary Jane Sunday. Weeks after his birth, his father died in the Civil War and "Billy" largely grew up in orphanages. While working at an Iowa furniture store, he was discovered on local ballfields by Chicago White Stockings' legend Adrian "Cap" Anson. By 1883, the MLB rookie outfielder remained a mediocre hitter—but as Al Spalding, a former player and early baseball executive, observed, "People love to see him run."

But Sunday, nursing childhood wounds and trying to fit in, often ran with a rough crowd.

An 1887 "Old Judge" baseball card shows Sunday in uniform. That was his first year as a Christian. While "tanked up" and hanging out with buddies at State and Madison streets in Chicago, Sunday heard a band from Pacific Garden Mission playing across the street. It reminded Sunday of the hymns his mother sang when he was a child and now inspired his conversion, prompting Sunday to say "Goodbye boys... I'm going to Jesus Christ. We've come to a parting of the ways."

In 1888, he married Helen "Nell" Thompson—a gifted Presbyterian who would later travel with him, managing ministry commitments. He played baseball

through

1890, as speaking opportunities grew. In the spring of 1891, Nell counseled him to turn down \$500 a month from Cincinnati's team in favor of \$83.33 a month from the YMCA, honoring God. Gradually moving from small towns to urban "tent meetings," over the next several decades millions heard the fundamental gospel coupled with calls for women's rights and educational reforms.

Sunday came to San Diego Aug. 7 to 10, 1915, as America's most renowned preacher. The word was clear: this Nation's might and beauty lay not merely in human industry but in moral and spiritual commitment. As San Diego History Center's Matthew Schiff has observed, "Expositions and the larger World's fairs were a great way to reach large, diverse audiences in those days, and a wonderful way to advance a message."

On Oct. 27, 1917, during eight weeks of Los Angeles meetings, Sunday returned to San Diego-visiting the brand-new Camp Kearney, praying with and encouraging America's WWI troops. More than a decade later, in early 1931, the evangelist was again in town, ministering to Depression-era gatherings.

A woman in one of my churches, converted under Sunday's preaching, recalled "coming forward" after he picked up a large wooden chair, exclaimed "Do this to sin!" and smashed it on the platform.

From Billy Sunday, timeless coaching for the Game of Life!

The Rev. Dr. James D. Smith III is Professor of Church History at Bethel Seminary San Diego, and Associate Pastor at La Jolla Christian Fellowship.



Billy Sunday played professional baseball for the Chicago White Stockings, Pittsburgh Alleghenys and Philadelphia Phillies over eight seasons, from 1883 through 1890. This 128-yearold baseball card shows Sunday in a Chicago White Stockings uniform.

Billy Sunday preaches at the Organ Pavilion in Balboa Park during the 1915 Panama-California Exposition.

> Photos and baseball card are from the personal collection of James D. Smith III

Rx for active living

CAROL LEBEAU

Skin cancer real threat to SoCal sun lovers

Once again, I've been "benched" by my dermatologist. No running, swimming or biking for two weeks.

For the fifth time in two years, a squamous cell skin cancer has claimed a big chunk of my body. Two ugly scars on my right forearm...two on my right shin and the latest...an angry incision healing on my right calf muscle.

It's a bummer for sure. But you know what's really sad? I deserve every one of those scars.

Through high school and college, I worked summers as a lifeguard...arriving at work early so I could "lay out" in the sun before baking myself for eight more hours keeping watch over a huge municipal pool reflecting back on me.

To get a jump-start on my tan, I'd fry myself over spring break while visiting my grandmother in Phoenix, and schedule my college spring semester classes so I could sizzle a little more under the mid-

MOST COMMMON SKIN CANCERS

Basal Cell Carcinoma

BCC often appears as a pink or pearly papule or a pink, scaly patch. It grows locally and does not spread to other parts of the body.

Squamous Cell Carcinoma

SCC has a precursor lesion called actinic keratosis. It appears as a pink patch. Invasive SCC is a thicker, pink, scaly patch. It's usually locally destructive, but aggressive SCC can spread to lymph nodes and other organs.

Malignant Melanoma

This is the deadliest form of skin cancer. It may rise from pre-existing moles or appear independently. Early detection (see ABCDE's) is crucial. It can spread to lymph nodes and other organs and result in death.

day sun in the courtyard of my dorm.

Determined to be

bronze for a winter frat party, I once sat before a sunlamp exposing myself to three times the ultraviolet light recommended (because, stupidly, I couldn't "feel" anything!) and landed in the ER with second-degree burns several hours later!

FELONY stupid!

Now, all the sunscreen in the world can't stop the self-inflicted damage to my once-smooth skin.

Arch Health Partner Dermatologist Dr. Diane Scott says she sees plenty of patients like me. The sad truth is there's no turning back.

"Once you've had a cancerous lesion," explains Dr. Scott, "your chance of having more increases. Damage to the DNA in skin cells from ultraviolet exposure has reached a threshold which promotes the transformation to cancerous cells."

Not very encouraging for those of us from the baby oil, iodine and reflector generation. But this doesn't have to be your story. The key is prevention!

When used properly, today's sunscreens are entirely effective. Dr. Scott recommends choosing one that is broad spectrum (covering UVA and UVB) with an SPF of 30 or higher.

"Reapply every two hours if in the sun," says Dr. Scott. "For sensitive skin, choose one labeled for babies."

Those with fair skin who sunburn easily are at highest risk to develop skin cancer. Other risk factors include family history, having more than 25 moles and smoking.

"The effect of the sun is cumulative," says Dr. Scott. "So every walk to and from the car and mailbox add up. Even light clothing and car windows allow UV to reach the skin."

So, how do you know when that



"thing" on your arm needs to be looked at by a doctor? Basically, if it's a new or changing lesion or a mole that looks different from the others, get it checked. According to Dr. Scott, that "thing" on your face that looks like a pimple, but doesn't go away... could be a basal cell carcinoma.

Then, be on the lookout for the deadliest form of skin cancer: malignant melanoma. (Check the accompanying box for the ABCDE's of melanoma) Early detection is crucial because it can spread to the lymph nodes and other organs, resulting in death.

Still not motivated to apply that sunscreen? I'll be happy to show you my scars.

THE ABCDES OF MELANOMA

- A Asymmetry: mole or patch not symmetrical in formation.
- B Border: irregular border of poorly defined.
- C Color: variations in color within the mole, black color, sometimes red or pink.
- D **Diameter:** greater than six millimeters.
- E **Evolving:** moles are changing size, color, shape or look different from all the rest.



Carol LeBeau is a former 10News anchor, Staying Healthy reporter and current Health Champion for Palomar Health, avid runner, bicyclist and ranked, rough water

swimmer. Learn more at www.carollebeau.com.

Cancer Q&A with Dr. Scott

Skin cancer is on the rise in Southern California and for a logical reason. We love the sun, no matter the season. So, before hitting the beach to soak up some rays, check out what Arch Health Partner Dermatologist Dr. Diane Scott has to say to former sun lover Carol LeBeau.

Carol: How long is too long in the sun? Dr. Scott: There is no safe amount of sun exposure!

Carol: Really?! Don't we need the sun's vitamin D?

Dr. Scott: Studies show UVB-induced vitamin D synthesis can lead to DNA damage. It's safer to get vitamin D through diet or supplements.

Carol: How can you possibly avoid the sun in San Diego?!

Dr. Scott: Wear sunscreen every day, or protective clothing and a hat. Avoid tanning beds and the sun between 10 and 2.

Carol: Does diet play a role?

Dr. Scott: Yes. A diet or supplements rich in antioxidants.

Carol: Is there a supplement you recommend?

Dr. Scott: Yes. One called polypodium leucotomos has been shown to decrease UV-induced damage to the skin.

Carol: What's the treatment for the most common skin cancers?

Dr. Scott: Most are treated surgically. But some topical treatments can be used for superficial skin cancers.

Carol: Do you recommend routine skin

Dr. Scott: Yes. Yearly exams for adults and every six months for those with skin cancer history.

Carol: I have to ask... do you ever enjoy the sun?

Dr. Scott: I like to hike, swim and enjoy the beach...from under the umbrella, cabana, hat and sunscreen.

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New band 6th Day Made creates debut single

Christian rock band 6th Day Made, whose members have shared the stage with some of the biggest names in the industry, have debuted their breakout single, "The Story of Love."

Guitarist and background vocalist Mark Maggard said the song perfectly underscores the band's mission.

"As we read about Jesus on the cross, we picture it in our mind," Maggard said. "And greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. It's not a love story; it's the love story. It's the story of love in the highest; it's the story of God's love for us. So it's really an extraordinary experience for us to be a part of the song."

Maggard shares the stage with lead vocalist Jason Eaton, Randy 'Doc' Healy on bass and Jeff Trent on drums. Members of the Michigan-based band have appeared with Newsboys, Jeremy Camp, Hawk Nelson Thousand Foot Krutch and Crowder.

The band's name—which refers to the Genesis passage where on the sixth day, God surveyed all He'd created and saw that it was good—was a suggestion from a fan. When the group heard it, Maggard recalled that they collectively said, "How profound is that?"

The group is taking its various musical styles to various music festivals this summer and are in the process of recording a five-song EP that will release this fall.

International House of Praver

Onething Live: Shout Your Name, recorded before 20,000 worshipers at last December's Onething young adult conference at the International House of Prayer of Kansas City, has released.

Focusing on the conference's theme of "Until the fame of Jesus fills the earth," each song from the 11-track project reflects the unique musical and spiritual giftings shared by the worship team at the House of Prayer.

Produced by Forerunner Music, the session featured some of the label's artists, including worship leaders Misty Edwards, Jaye Thomas, Laura Hackett Park, Jonas Park, Jon Thurlow, Justin Rizzo and Rvan Kondo.

"The eternal Love of Jesus is beautifully expressed in these compelling songs," reported newreleasetoday.com.

Since 2002, downtown Kansas City has been transformed each December into a global destination for thousands of fiery worshipers who head to the fourday conference at the Kansas City Convention Center.

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Prayer-focused 'War Room' opens Aug. 28

by MICHAEL FOUST

The director who helped bring "Courageous," "Fireproof" and "Facing the Giants" to the big screen has a big goal for his next film: He wants to see Christians change the way they pray.

That director is Alex Kendrick, and his next movie, "War Room," hits theaters Aug. 28 with a bright spotlight on the power of prayer. It tells the story of a middle-class couple in a big city whose marriage is falling apart—until an elderly woman (Miss Clara) enters the picture and helps transform the wife's heart. Miss Clara is the quintessential prayer warrior, even going so far as to dedicate a large closet in her home solely to prayer. It's her "war room"—the place where she goes to "do battle" in the spiritual realm. She lines the closet walls with notes, helping her remember not only for whom to pray but also reminding her of times in which God answered prayers.

"War Room" stars T.C. Stallings and Priscilla Shirer as the husband and wife, and Karen Abercrombie as Miss Clara. Kendrick also has a role.

"When I talk to other believers, almost all of them have something of a strategy for their finances, for their health, for their children's education, for their retirement," Kendrick told Refreshed. "But if you ask them, 'What's your strategy for prayer?' they look at you funny. ... They don't have one."

A Christian's prayers, Kendrick said, tends to focus on matters such as healing and safety.

"Those are elementary prayers," Kendrick said. "How do we get to the deeper things? ... In this movie, we see a young wife being mentored by an elderly prayer warrior, who teaches her to fight the right way with the right weapons—which is first in prayer using the Word of God."

Following Miss Clara's lead, Shirer's character empties a closet in her home and turns it into her own spiritual "war room."

It's the fifth film from Alex and his brother Stephen Kendrick, whose string of



PHOTO BY KEVIN PEEPLES, COURTESY OF AFFIRM FILMS/PROVIDENT FILMS

Miss Clara (Karen Abercrombie) shares a moment with Elizabeth Jordan (Priscilla Shirer) in a scene from "War Room," the latest offering from the creators of "Courageous" and "Fireproof."

box office hits not only helped inspire other faith-based filmmakers but also motivated Hollywood to put more money behind such projects. "Fireproof" and "Courageous" opened in the Top 5 at the box office, with the latter film opening at No. 1 on the first weekend in per-theater average.

B&H Publishing is partnering with the Kendricks to release a book by them, "The Battle Plan for Prayer," along with a War Room Bible Study and a War Room Church Campaign Kit.

The movie features an African American family in the lead roles—something that excites Stallings.

"And I like the fact that it shows us winning against issues and sin and problemas opposed to someone dving or we're going to a funeral," he said, referencing mainstream films. "We're victorious, we're victorious through Christ. Maybe some families will say, 'We can do that, too.' An African American family in a rough neighborhood, or even a good neighborhood, they can say, 'We can come out of this if we pray.' No matter what our color is, prayer is the answer."

Learn more at www.warroomthemovie.

Cal Thomas

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To schedule Cal Thomas for your next special event. contact Mark Larson.

(619) 881-2851 mark@marklarson.com



Gaither Homecoming Tour coming to Skyline Church

LA MESA — Songwriter Bill Gaither will be bringing his Gaither Vocal Band and several other artists to Skyline Church in La Mesa on Sunday night, Oct. 4 as part of a west coast tour.

The concert will also feature The Isaacs, The Martins, Charlotte Ritchie, Gene McDonald and Kevin Williams.

Gaither and his wife, Gloria, have been two of the most prolific gospel songwriters of modern time with more than 700 songs to their credit, including classics like "He Touched Me" and "Because He Lives."

He has also produced more than 100 videos as part of the Homecoming series which features the best artists in Southern Gospel Music.

Learn more or purchase tickets at www.premierproductions.com.

Golf tourney to raise funds for Atkinson kidney transplant

LA MESA — Refreshed magazine featured the inspirational story of La Mesa resident Mike Atkinson in our March issue. Atkinson, who suffers from kidney failure and has been on peritoneal dialysis since March, is currently on a waiting list for a kidney transplant.

On Friday, Sept. 11, the Mike Atkinson Golf Tournament will seek to raise funds to assist in the Atkinsons' financial burden associated with a kidney transplant.

The tournament will be held at the Steele Canyon Golf Club beginning at 1 p.m. with a banquet at 6 p.m.

Learn more or register online at www. kidneytransplantfundraiser.com or call (858) 518-7252 or (619) 249-9737.

Bridge Builders Breakfast set for September

SAN DIEGO — The Bridge Builders Business and Faith Leadership Breakfast, an annual event for professional men and women of faith, will be held from 7 to 9 a.m. Sept. 30 at the DoubleTree by Hilton in Mission Valley.



The event is designed to bridge the gap between business and faith in an effort to transform the community.

Speakers for the event include Dr. Tom Thompson, senior vice president of World Help and Maria Keckler, Fortune 500 corporate trainer and best-selling author of "Bridge Builders: How Superb Communicators Get What They Want."

Business owners, business professionals, community and ministry leaders are encouraged to attend this inspirational event.

Jenn Karlman from Fox 5 will serve as emcee.

Advance tickets are \$45 until Aug. 31, then the price increases to \$50.

The event is hosted by Professional Women's Fellowship and Superb Communication, in partnership with One Degree Advisors.

Fall gala to benefit **Plant with Purpose**

LA COSTA— Plant with Purpose will hold its 2015 Planting Hope Dinner and Gala, Oct. 3 at the Omni La Costa Resort and Spa.

The evening includes complimentary valet parking, reception and threecourse dinner.

The program will highlight the various opportunities to support the work of Plant With Purpose, and offers silent, live, and fund-a-need auctions as part of the fundraising event.

Those interested in the ministry of Plant with Purpose can learn more at a quarterly field update, to be held from 5:30-7:00 p.m. Sept. 10 at the ministry

Plant with Purpose is located at 4747 Morena Blvd., Suite 100.

Learn more at www.plantwithpurpose.org.

Jerry Jenkins to headline writer's conference

SAN DIEGO - Jerry Jenkins, the coauthor of the best-selling "Left Behind" series, will be the keynote speaker at the annual San Diego Writers Conference, set for Oct. 23-24 at the Rancho Bernardo Radisson.

In addition to general sessions, the conference includes breakout workshops and networking opportunities.

The hotel is located at 11520 W. Bernardo Court.

Learn more at www.sandiegocwg.com.

Church at RB offers free legal aid

RANCHO BERNARDO — The Church at Rancho Bernardo offers free Legal Aid Clinics on the second Saturday morning of each month.

Open to the public, regardless of belief, the clinic's provide access to licensed attorneys who can assist with any legal issues. Previous clinics have addressed such issues as debt collections, immigration, worker's compensation, bankruptcy, personal injury, discrimination, eviction and contract disputes.

For more information or to make an appointment, call (858) 230-2321.

Reigniting dreams

SAN DIEGO – C3 Church San Diego will host the Cherish Women's Conference 2015 from Sept. 17 to 19 at its central campus. This year's theme is "Dream Again."

Speakers for the event include Leanne Matthesius, who co-pastors C3 with her husband Jurgen; Lisa Bevere, a best-selling author; Chris Pringle, co-founder of the C3 movement; and Holly Wagner, copastor of Oasis Church, a multi-cultural congregation in Los Angeles.

Learn more at www.thecherishconference.com.

EVENTS ONLINE

For more Community News and an online Calendar of Events for San Diego County, please visit www.refreshedsandiego.com.







MARK LARSON

Waving hello to old memories

As the song says, "There ain't no cure for the summertime blues." Forget the grammatical issue with that line (though "ain't" is now in dictionaries). There really are many ways to remedy this seasonal malady.

I know, "malady" is an old-fashioned word, but in the cycles of life, everything old is new again.

Or it can be.

As our culture forgets (or intentionally ignores) history, it's easy to bring back a long-forgotten product or idea, dress it up really purty as something new and innovative, and a new "genius" is born. People don't know what they don't know. It's part of life's cycles of activity, right? Or maybe it's summertime blues messing with my head again.

At this time each year I remember all of the things I planned on doing before Labor Day, but alas (another good old word), not so much. Best-laid plans, etc. Then I frustrate myself by not carving out enough time to relax, read and refresh. I'm realizing this will be a constant personal challenge.

Recently I was sitting on a bluff above the beach in the Dana Point area. taking a break from speaking at a conference in a nearby hotel. I made it a point to skip looking at the phone, or iPad, or reading for a few minutes. I just focused on the endless blue ocean and listened to the surf.

The more I sat still, the louder it became, and its rhythm was almost hypnotic. My mind drifted to random places as waves became a soundtrack for my thoughts.

For whatever reason, I soon reflected on how America has lost a sense of childhood wonder ... and how our kids are pressed on all sides to get past their innocence, way too fast.

Suddenly there was a mental image of an old photo I found recently. It was my

Mom and Dad, way back when, before they were married. They looked so young, so full of energy and affection, just sitting on a blanket, sunning themselves in summer wear, at my grandparents' home.

Right there in a hot, humid Rockford, Illinois backyard.

They didn't need an ocean, a resort, an iPad, cell phone or anything, really. Just each other. They had no idea then that in the years ahead I would arrive, then a sister, then twins (brother and sister). While my parents would separate years later, today we all remain close anyway. A very good thing.

Innocence. Everything was simple, and optimistic and wonderful back in the day.

My mind then contemplated Grandma and Grandpa Larson's old house on 19th Street. It stood proudly, above and to the right of where Mom and Dad sat on that hot blanket.

As the sound of the waves on the Pacific massaged my brain, I could remember the layout of the place. Every room, the furniture, the smell of homemade bread... and Grandpa's wood saw in the basement workroom where he created my outdoor playhouse, plank by plank.

I could almost hear the voice of Grandma and her sister "Gunny" going back and forth about how to take the next step in a recipe they were working on, while keeping an eye on what the neighbors were up to across the street.

I guess you can go home again, even to a home they left decades ago. I was amazed at how much I recalled.

Rhythms of life

The sea breeze blew and the surf sounds made me feel as if I was the only person there on the California coast.

Then I was suddenly remembering the comfort and security of a summer weekend visit to Grandma's. Nothing



like being cozy in bed in the morning as the sun rose, birds chirped and, in the distance, the sounds of local industry coming to life.

My hometown was a huge machine tool center then, and there was a steady rhythm of the factories that sent a message like this: It's OK. The economy is humming along, everything will be OK. That, and the sound of trains lumbering through town were like sweet, steadying music for me.

Who knew then what the future would hold for Rockford and that now mostly lost industry. So much has changed, and often not for the better. But it all lives on in my memory, and time won't change that.

It took the sounds along our coast with no other daily distractions—to give me one of the best lessons of this summer. I was reminded again that everything old is still important, and as life speeds by it's a good thing to occasionally go back and take a mental walk through the past, connecting with our roots, and finding encouragement and joy to fuel the future.



Larson is a longtime Southern California radio/television personality. His voice is heard on KPRZ 1210AM and his weekday talkshow airs 6 to 9 a.m.

on AM 1170 "The Answer." He's also a news analyst on KUSI TV. Learn more at marklarson.com.

Are you wired, tired, or mentally inspired?

Tell me if you can relate to this scenario. It's been a long, hard week, and you have a social event happening at your house on the weekend. There are about two-dozen things on your "to do list" that need to be completed as soon as possible. You wonder where you will find the time. Sleep is sacrificed, and the sleep you do get is not the best quality because your mind thinks of even more things to add to your list.

Have you noticed that reality starts to change as the stress increases and the fatigue sets in? You start to become inefficient in getting things done. You start trying to multitask all the items on your list at the same time.

Weird things start to happen. The more you work, the more things get out of place. For example, in cleaning up the kitchen, my wife discovered last week that she had put her cell phone in the refrigerator.

Before you laugh at her, I will confess that I found my toothbrush on the barbecue last week. Maybe it is a sign of old age, but in my defense I will say that I was running on just a few hours sleep.

It goes something like this: I'm brushing my teeth and realize that my cell phone needs to be charged. I can do this while brushing my teeth to save time, so I go to plug in my phone. An alert on my phone tells me that I need to remember to buy propane for the barbecue. I put the phone in my pocket and rush outside to pull the tank because I don't want to forget. While disconnecting the tank from the barbecue the toothpaste really is getting overwhelming and so I spit it out in a nearby bush (I know, not cool). That bush really needs some water, and a rinse, so I go to get the hose. Then my phone rings and I rush back in the house to speak to my wife about the call.

In the end, the phone doesn't get

charged, the propane tank is partly disconnected from the barbecue, the plant is not watered and the toothbrush is left on the barbecue. No, this is not my standard operating procedure. Reading a novel on my mobile phone late into the

night is not a wise thing to do.

Poor sleep results in difficulties with focused attention and distractibility, easy irritability, and difficulty controlling one's emotions. In other words, sleep deprivation causes the average person to de-

velop all the classic symptoms of Attention Deficit Disorder.

The brain likes to function at an optimal level of arousal. When a person has ADD, or if they are sleep deprived, the brain is actually functioning at a reduced level of arousal. To compensate for this lowered state of arousal the brain seeks to increase stimulation from the senses, through increased movement, distraction, fidgeting or excessively talking.

Stimulants, such as caffeine or Ritalin, artificially raise the brain's arousal level, causing some people to actually slow down and focus better.

So, if you find that you are misplacing your keys, getting irritated easily, fidgeting excessively, and displaying all the classical signs of ADD, consider either drinking more caffeinated beverages (NOT!), or, get some refreshing

In the last decade another option has opened up that you may not know about. In addition to making sure that you are not sleep deprived, you can also train your brain to improve your "work-

ing memory."

Research has shown that by training your working memory you will improve your ability to stay focused, ignore distractions. remember instruction, and finish tasks. Computer based training programs are

being used to help children achieve better academic grades. Adults are finding that their professional performance and focusing stamina significantly improve.

God made our brains to be highly adaptable and flexible. Like plastic, we have a lot of control over how we mold our brains through the choices we make.

To learn more about how to train your brain, please visit our website at www.lighthousepsy.com.



Daniel Jenkins, Ph.D. is a licensed clinical psychologist at Lighthouse Psychological Services in Mission Valley. He is also a professor of psychology at Point

Loma Nazarene University. Learn more at www. lighthousepsy.com.

JANICE THOMPSON

Practically speaking... Becoming a wise investor - Part 2

Remember that childhood admonition before you cross a street: stop, look, and listen? It is much the same for investing. As you pause, look both ways, and listen for warning sounds, you can then step carefully into that busy street. Here are the first of nine questions to ask yourself before you cross Investment Street, Anytown, USA.

Purpose. What am I trying to ac-Purpose. What am A and Complish? If you were to tell me you'd like to invest X amount of money, my first question would be "why?" If you are simply trying to "make more money," you might be tempted to throw money at anything that looks good and sounds great. If, however, you begin with clearly defined goals in mind, it greatly narrows the choices to more appropriate and suitable solutions. I call this purpose allocation before asset allocation.

Time. How much time do I have to make this investment work for me? A short-term (two years or less) investment decision will look entirely different than a long-term goal of 10 years or more. The research company Dalbar reported that stocks in the S&P 500 have generated an average annual total return of about 11 percent over the past several decades. During that same period, however, the average investor in U.S. stock funds earned just over 3.5 percent. Why? Think emotions! There have been two significant stock market corrections since 2000, both frightening and painful. If, during this time, you pulled out of stocks and sat on the sidelines waiting for the right time to get back in, you probably missed it. Time out of the market can be as great of a risk as staying in the market during tough times. Understanding your

timeline plays a huge role in investment stamina—your ability to weather the ups and downs of the market cycles without letting emotions dictate your decisions.

Risk. Do I understand my risk tol-**Derance?** Risk and return are closely correlated. The longer the time horizon, the more risk you can typically accept and more return you can generally expect. The shorter the time horizon, the more risk should be minimized, and thus, less return should be expected. All investments have risk and you need to understand how much is appropriate based on your ability to weather volatile market cycles.

Diversification. Am I appropriately **4** diversified? This is a just another way of saying, "Don't put all your eggs in one basket...or even two." Ecclesiastes 11:2 says, "Divide your investments among many places, for you do not know what risks might lie ahead." No matter how confident you are in a particular investment, no matter how many times someone promises it's a sure thing-it's not. Diversification can be among the most effective strategies for preserving and growing capital over time. It does not, however, guarantee a profit or protection from losses in declining markets. I apply the diversification principle in two ways:

The first involves dividing investments across multiple asset classes: stocks or bonds, for example. Stocks generally provide higher, long-term returns but can also be very volatile. Bonds tend to be less volatile but produce lower returns. Alternative investments such as precious metals, real estate, or commodities can also add asset class diversification.

The second applies to **investment**

style. All strategies basically come down to two approaches: passive and active investing. The passive approach more or less follows a market index and generates the returns, good or bad, of that particular index. (Note: You cannot invest directly in an index) The active approach varies widely but has one common objective: to enhance returns and/or reduce risk.

Due diligence. Do I understand **Ithis investment choice?** There's no substitute for doing your homework. Media outlets tend to draw investors into the hype of investment ideas and ultimately, poor investment choices. Unfortunately, many lack basic financial literacy to help them discern the difference between good investment choices and inappropriate ones. I've seen investors, lured by enticing promises, overlook this very important step. And while we're on this subject, please hear me: There is no such thing as a risk-free, high return, guaranteed investment! If it sounds too good to be true, stop and dig deeper. Proverbs 14:5 says that "the naïve believe everything, but the sensible man considers his steps."

Stop! Look! Listen! You're almost ready to cross Investment Street...Part 3 coming next month.



Janice Thompson is a certified financial planner and co-founder/CEO of One Degree Advisors, Inc. A frequent speaker on financial topics and mentor for financial

professionals, she also serves on the board of directors for Kingdom Advisors. Learn more at www. onedegreeadvisors.com.

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MICHAEL FOUST

3 ways to raise modest kids (in an immodest world)

I'm not sure when parents began debating the so-called "sheltering" of children, but I'm pretty sure the conversation became far more significant when television was invented-that is, when we allowed culture to invade our lives.

I tend to fall into the let's-shelterour-kids camp—at least for youngsters but I've come to a simple conclusion: It's impossible. For instance ...

My 3-year-old daughter and I recently were sitting at the newest restaurant in town, sharing a Reuben sandwich and a plate of fries while coloring our favorite animals, when her eyes caught the image on one of the overhanging TV sets.

"Daddy, she's naked!"

I took a quick look at the television to see what she was referencing—it was, if you're curious, "Entertainment Tonight"-and then told her in a reassuring voice, "You're right. We need to pray that woman finds some clothes."

Legally and technically, my daughter was wrong: The woman, a model, wasn't naked. But biblically and practically? My daughter was right on the mark. And I was proud of her.

God clothed Adam and Eve with animal skin in the garden (Genesis 3:21), but ever since, Calvin Klein and Abercrombie & Fitch and every other designer and store have been trying to remove it, inch by inch. Their creations in ritzy New York studios create a domino effect: sold in stores, bought by teens, and then returned by parents. But it's not just Christian families who have weekly "you're not going out like that!" arguments. This issue crosses ideological and cultural boundaries.

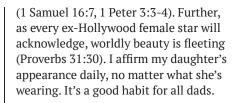
Scripture says we are to kill desires of the flesh (Galatians 5:24) but immodesty does just the opposite, bringing it back to life and encouraging its captives to strut around like a boastful halfnaked peacock.

Of course, we shouldn't simply blame fashion designers for this problem. Their clothes wouldn't have gone over well with, say, the Pilgrims or even Colonial Americans. We as a society buy those clothes, and this issue often is a matter of the heart.

Still, there are practical steps parents can take to raise modest children in an immodest world. Here are three:

Set a standard for modesty. But make it a biblical one. The first question should never be "Is it trendy?" but rather "Is it modest?" (1 Timothy 2:9). If you're still struggling, then try this one: "Would this potentially bring shame to God?" Or even better, "Would you wear this in the physical presence of Christ?" Or finally, "Could you have worn this 50 years ago?" (And if not, why?) Trends can be fun if we view them through a biblical lens, but too often we get so caught up trying to look like the latest Disney starlet that we leave our Bible-figuratively speakingin the dressing room. It may be trendy for 10-year-old girls to prance around like 20-year-old "swimsuit" models, but it never will be OK.

• Set a standard for beauty. Our society's standard for female beauty is simple and shameful: tall, skinny, curvy, blemish-free, young. Oh yeah, and blond. It works great if you're one of the 50 women in America who look that way, but for the other 150 million women, it's impossible. Thankfully, God has a different standard—and why wouldn't He? He made us. God looks not at outward appearance but at the heart



Set a standard in the home. It's **I**not enough to be modest simply in public. Our homes are a sort of practice field for life, where our kids can see biblical ethics on display. My children learned the word "modest" at an early age and, generally, they must dress in private as they do in public. I don't let my boys run around like Tarzan or their sister dress up like Jane, and that rule goes for Mom and Dad, too. Besides, my kids would rather pretend to be Spiderman anyway.



Michael Foust is the father of three small children, a writer and editor, and blogs about parenting at www. michaelfoust.com.

BARNABAS PIPER

Knowing God without knowing all of God

In the post-enlightenment Western world we live by rules of science. Theories are posed, evidence is gathered, facts disputed, and in the end truth is discovered. At least truth about some things is discovered. But the model of scientific discovery simply does not apply to much of life.

One of the not-so-subtle tenets of enlightenment thinking is the disregard for the supernatural and the subsequent magnification of mankind. Man has superseded deity as the primary force and value in the world. We can see this even in the gut reaction to the Bible's stories of the supernatural. When we hear of demons and exorcisms they don't seem present or real. They seem more like tales of dragons and ghouls and knights in shining armor. To put

stock in such fanciful tales, according to many, has the same value (at best) as finding the morals in Grimm's fairy

To many modern thinkers, though, belief in God and a holding to religion is akin to intentional stupidity. It is built, they say, on tradition and custom taking hold of our minds and a refusal to think in any other direction. (In some cases they are correct, but that is hardly a fair characterization.) Because they cannot see God or plausible evidence of His being, to believe in Him is outright madness. To them, believing in God is like holding fast to the Easter Bunny or Santa Claus.

God does not fit the world as Western thinkers have shaped it. He does not fit the processes and grids of theory, evidence and proof. So He is relegated to those second-tier statuses of religious

tradition, personal values, and vague spirituality.

The God of the Bible, though, will not be relegated to anything. He is omnipotent creator of all, including all those who are doing the relegating. It's important that we see Him as the God "of the

God is infinite, beyond our understanding, and He chose to reveal Himself to us in a way that sparks questions rather than settling all of them.

> Bible" too, because that is how He has chosen to explain and reveal Himself to us. If you are a Christian, what you know of God comes from the Bible: it is the breathed-out revelation from the heart of God to the hands of man.

> What the Bible reveals of God is precisely what God wanted revealed of Himself, no more and no less. But it isn't everything about Him. Scripture raises as many questions as it answers. It asks the impossible and describes the miraculous. The Bible tells stories that are grotesque and stories that are heartwarming. Parts of it are horrifying and others are befuddling. It is written in multiple genres and has thousands of characters. In short, it is representative of the real world and God's relationship with it, not a book to simplify the world so we can understand it all. And it is just the way God wanted it.

This should tell us something both about God and about belief. God is infinite, beyond our understanding, and He chose to reveal Himself to us in a way that sparks questions rather than settling all of them. God did not want us to have easy instructions and simple

> answers. He didn't want us to be able to understand Him so well that we can package him, wrap him, and put a bow on Him. (Of course many in the evangelical church do their best to accomplish just this. They want a God who can be understood in full and explained systematically. They fail to recognize the meaning of the terms "infinite" and "omnipotent." God cannot be grasped, not in full, and that's what makes Him God.)

If we could do that, what about Him would be worthy of worship? In fact, God could not do such a thing; He could not shrink himself, his profound and unfathomable self, to a size our human minds and hearts could grasp. He wanted us to search, to wrestle, to wonder, to be mystified. He wanted us to ask.

This article is an excerpt from "Help My Unbelief: Why Doubt is Not the Enemy of Faith," Barnabas's new book (David C. Cook, July, 2015).



Barnabas Piper is the author of "The Pastor's Kid: Finding Your Own Faith and Identity" and "Help My Unbelief: Why Doubt is Not the Enemy of Faith." He blogs at The Blazing

Center, and co-hosts The Happy Rant podcast.

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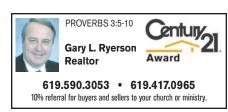
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JOANNE BROKAW

Only in my dreams

I was quite proud of myself as I sat down to write this month's column, mostly because I knew I had already written it weeks ago. All I had to do was give it a final proof and hit send.

It's good to get ahead of deadlines. I've been really busy the last month and it took a load off my mind to know I wasn't going to have to scramble for a column idea.

Look at me! I'm planning ahead! The problem occurred when, the day before my deadline, I went to open the document and realized that there wasn't any document to open. At least not a column for this month. I had made notes about books I want to read, funny quotes I heard while watching shows on Netflix, and a recipe for homemade orange sherbet.

But no column. What?

I know I wrote that column, I'm sure of it. I know because I remember that it was a great column. A really great col-

I'm usually so tired from cleaning in my dreams that I don't have the energy to clean in real life.

umn. In fact, it was one of those magical columns that pretty much writes itself, a true contender for my next "Best Of" compilation book.

I don't remember what the idea actually was, but trust me. It was great.

Where did it go? I searched through folders on my computer and then searched through folders on my desk. Then I searched through the pile of papers on the floor and the post-it notes stuck all over my laptop. Uh oh. Wait a minute. I think I know what happened. I didn't lose the column. I never actually wrote it.

Rats. Not again. they didn't happen in real OK, confession time. life. It's quite possible that Like cleaning the I wrote the column in a house. I'll be doggoned dream, not in my if I don't have vivid (and actual waking life. That frequent) dreams happens to me a about scrubbing lot lately.

I go to bed and fall into a deep slumber, not unlike the slumber Sleeping Beauty experienced, except my first morning kiss isn't from a handsome prince but a stinky, shedding Border collie. (The handsome prince kisses me later, on his way out to storm the castle.)

In that deep slumber, I dream vivid dreams, traveling to my own Wonderland of weirdness, twisting through my own adventure in Oz. My dreams are often in full Technicolor, complete with smell, taste and sound, and they often

feel very real.

I once dreamed I was taking a tour of a candy factory. The tour guide was showing us a new candy bar, made entirely from slices of oranges. She handed each of us a bar and told us to try it

for ourselves. I actually remember tearing the corner of the wrapper to expose perfectly formed and layered slices of dried oranges. I heard the paper rip and felt it crinkle in my fingers. I remember licking the candy and tasting the most incredible flavor I've ever tasted. Just thinking about the dream, I can taste the sweet, sweet orange on my tongue again.

So the fact that I dreamed about writing a column, and woke believing that I actually wrote the column, isn't really unusual. I do a lot of things in my dreams and then am surprised to learn

the floors, rearranging furniture, and decorating every room until it looks like something from a magazine, only to wake to piles of laundry, clutter everywhere and dust bunnies the size of Volkswagens.

Unfortunately, I'm usually so tired from cleaning in my dreams that I don't have the energy to clean in real life. I leave it for another day and hope that, even if my cleaning dreams don't come true, at least elves are real and they like to do housework.

I'm sorry to say that you're stuck with a mediocre column this month. But I'll do better next time, I promise. Last night, I dreamed that I hired an assistant to keep track of everything I write while I'm sleeping. He promises to make sure that the brilliant ideas I have in my dreams at least make it to notes on the candy wrappers littering my nightstand. Isn't that great? I'll never lose another idea again! But even better? This dream assistant likes to dust.



Award-winning freelance writer Joanne Brokaw spends her days dreaming of things she'd like to do but probably never will-like swimming with dolphins, cleaning

the attic and someday overcoming the trauma of elementary school picture day. She lives with two dogs, a cat, six chickens and one very patient husband. Learn more at www.joannebrokaw.com.

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