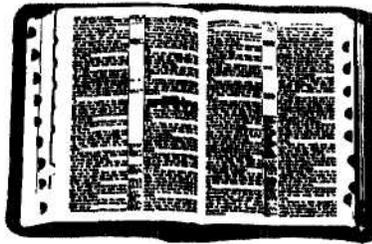


SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

"Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me"—John 5:39.



"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so"—Acts 17:11.

"DEVOTED TO THE SEARCH FOR DIVINE TRUTH"

VOLUME XXXII

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WHATEVER HAPPENED TO COMMON DECENCY?

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Drunkenness
Nudity
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SPECIAL ISSUE

Living In Perilous Times

Even a casual look around in our society will cause one to wonder, "Whatever happened to common decency?" What has happened to our sense of shame? Yet, we are not the only generation to ask these kind of questions. Even Christ and his apostles lived in perilous times and made it clear that we all will live in a continual age of conflict between good and evil.

No passage better describes the indecency of the world, the cause and the answer to the problem than 2 Timothy 3. In the first verse Paul said, "But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come."

The word translated "*perilous*" is only used twice in the New Testament. It is translated "fierce" in Matt. 8: 28. The ASV translates it "grievous" in our text. It describes a pathetic period of evil — difficult or troublesome times for the people of God.

In this chapter will we see the characteristics of the perilous times, how they are promoted, how Paul conducted himself in the midst of trying times and the answer to the problem.

I. Characteristics Of The Perilous Times (vs. 2-5)

A. *Emphasis on self* (v. 2). When men are "lovers of themselves" they are not really concerned with others or even God. Their only interest is in what they want and what makes them happy. Humanism tells us that's the way it ought to be. Man should be his own God. This characteristic is the basis and foundation for the rest of the traits in the context.

B. *Greedy* (v. 2). Being a "lover of money" (NJKV) or "covetous" (KJV) is a sign of one's selfishness. This is one reason we have the filth and obscenity on the movie and television screens. The bottom line is what kind of movie or show makes the most money.

The one who loves money is swallowed by materialism. Money and material things become the priority in life.



Editorial

Donnie V. Rader

Searching The Scriptures

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C. *Arrogant* (vs 2, 4). There are three terms used in this context to describe their arrogance. The "boasters" are those who make more of themselves than they really are. The "proud" looks down his nose at others. The "haughty" is one who is inflated with pride. He is a know-it-all.

D. *Disrespectful* (vs 2, 3). There are six references to the irreverence of those who make the times perilous. (1) Some will be "blasphemers" (v. 2). They speak evil of others, insult and criticize. (2) Many young people will be "disobedient to parents" (v. 2). When children develop the practice of showing little or no respect to their parents by talking back or flatly disobeying them, we are

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in troublesome times. (3) Others will be "unthankful" (v. 2) or ingrates. They show no appreciation for the things that others do for them. (4) Some will be "slanderers" (v. 3) who falsely accuse others to the ruin of their reputation. (5) Many will be "despisers of good" (v. 3). They have no respect for that which is good or those that stand for it. One reason that the filth and indecency is tolerated by so many people is that they have little or no appreciation for moral and Biblical principals or those who advocate them. (6) Many are "unloving" (v. 3) or "without natural affection" (KJV). This natural love is the kind of love that a parent has for a child or a child for the parent. J. W. Shepherd suggests in his commentary that this is common to every class of brutes. When we reach the point that we have no natural love or feeling then abortion, euthanasia, physical, emotional and sexual abuse follows. This is the very reason that many parents are put into nursing homes to be forgotten by their children.

E. *Unrestrained* (vs. 2, 3, 4). (1) Some live "without self-control" (v. 3). They allow their drives and passions to run wild and unbridled. (2) "Brutal" (v. 3) also describes an unrestrained life. The brutal are untamed and "fierce" (KJV). (3) The "unholy" (v. 2) engage in all forms of sin. They do not try to maintain a sense of purity. (4) The "headstrong" (v. 4) acts without wisdom or thought. He proceeds carelessly into whatever activity he wants.

F. *Can't be trusted* (vs. 3, 4). (1) Some are "unforgiving" (v. 3) or "irreconcilable" (NKJV footnote). You cannot get along with this person. He will not honestly resolve any differences. The KJV uses the term "truce-breakers" which gives the idea of one whose word means nothing. (2) "Traitors" (v. 4) are those who turn their backs on others.

G. *Thrill seekers* (v. 4). There will be those who are "lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God". They will seek things that a sensual. All they care about is the enjoyment, the thrill and the fun. No regard is given to God and his word. That's why people drink, smoke pot, shoot drugs into their bloodstream, go to X-rated movies, listen to filthy music and engage in all forms of sexual perversions.

H. *Have an outward form of godliness* (v. 5). Even though many will care nothing about God and even looking like they care about spiritual things, there will be some who will pretend to be godly despite their indecency. The Bible calls these people hypocrites.

Paul plainly tells us how we ought to deal with the people who live by the principles listed above. "And from such people turn away" (v. 5)! We cannot afford to participate in sin with them. Our only choice is to rebuke them and turn from them (1 Cor. 15: 33; 2 Cor. 6: 14-17; Eph. 5: 11).

We sometimes think that our society is worse than any society before us. However, a little reflection upon the Bible will tell us otherwise. Do you remember that God had to destroy the whole world (saving only eight people) because of sin (Gen. 6)? Do you remember that God destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah because they were given to sexual perversion (Gen. 19)? Do you remember that in the days of the Judges "everyone

did what was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21: 25)? Do you recall the disgusting description that Paul gave of the Gentile world when men were having sex with men and women with women (Rom. 1)? Do you remember how wicked the Corinthians were before they obeyed the gospel (1 Cor. 6: 9-11)?

Paul Harvey once said, "In times like these, it helps to recall that there have always been times like these" (Los Angeles Times Syndicate).

II. How Evil Men Advance And Promote These Times (vs. 6-9)

A. They work privately (v. 6). They "creep into" houses slowly and silently. More will be accomplished by working privately, undercover and planting the seeds slowly than using other methods. Subtle efforts are very successful.

B. They prey on the unlearned and immature (v. 6). They lead away the "gullible"—those who are easily impressed. The humanist well recognize this strategy for they start in early grades in school.

C. They prey on those interested in the novel (v. 7). They are always learning, yet never able to come to a knowledge of the truth. They want something new (Acts 17: 21).

III. Paul's Conduct In the Midst Of Ungodliness (vs. 10-13)

Paul draws a contrast in the life he described in vs. 2-5 and his own. He tells Timothy that his example should be followed. He speaks of his manner of life, faith, patience and endurance of persecutions. If Paul could live godly in the midst of perilous times, then so could Timothy and you and me. The indecency around us is no excuse for our own indecency.

IV. Continue In The Truth (vs. 14-17)

A. Paul tells Timothy to *remain* in the truth that he had been taught from a child (vs. 14-15). No matter what the rest of the world is doing, that doesn't change our standard.

B. The reason that the times are perilous is that men have *resisted the truth* (v. 8).

C. Therefore, the *answer* and *remedy* is to turn men back to the truth. That is the point of vs. 16-17 in the context. Paul is not just telling us that the word of God is inspired. His point is that the inspired word is designed to *reprove* and *rebuke* and turn perilous men into godly men. The answer to every one of the problems dealt with in this special is to turn back to the Bible.

Today

Today we are surrounded by the same kind of indecency that Paul and Timothy were more than 1900 years ago. We wonder how much worse the movie and television industry can become. Today's music leaves little to the imagination. The sexual pervers are coming out of

(Continued on page 7)

Humanism — The Heart Of The Problem

Conduct develops from concept. "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he" (Proverbs 23:7). The best of men live according to what they think. The basest of men live as they think. No man lives without a standard which determines his life-style. Morality or rightness is determined by one's set of mind.

To control a nation it is unnecessary to capture the entire citizenry. It is only necessary to conquer the government. So, to control one's conduct it is only necessary to capture one's mind.

No man lives precisely as his mind tells him — neither the noble or the ignoble man. Temporarily one's thinking may be affected by any number of things: a situation, associates or the general attitude of a culture. Finally, each man is brought back to law by what he thinks; or else he changes his thinking.

One's state of mind is the result of learning. In reference to moral education there are only two choices: God or man. "But my people harken not to my voice: and Israel would none of me. So I let them go after the stubbornness of their heart, that they might walk in their own counsels" (Ps. 81:11, 12). The theist, the Christian, believes that he is made in God's image and accepts the conclusion that all moral conduct springs from that fact. His circumstances of living is measured by that truth.

On the other side is Humanism. The Humanist does not believe that he is his own creator but he does believe that he controls his destiny and determines his own life-style.

These two views are irreconcilable, as much as flesh and spirit, light and darkness, God and idols (Gal. 5:16ff). Each necessarily produces opposite conclusions

and styles of living. What one believes, therefore, is the "heart of the problem". The argument between the Christian and the Humanist over what is obscene, filthy, perverted, decent, coarse and abusive can never be resolved until the mind of one is converted.

The point which this special edition makes is that many Christians are beginning to live like Humanists while trying to think like Christians — a hopeless impossibility. Many are unaware of this contradiction. This article takes the position the the **cause** for this change of living is that some Christians are beginning to **think** like Humanists.

From one point of view separation from the world is an "either is or isn't" thing. It is not a matter of degrees. It is a matter of thinking; and then acting as one thinks. The worldly state of mind produces the most horrible fruit.

Description

Humanism is neither hard to define nor difficult to understand. Its creed is clearly stated. Humanists describe their faith as, "a philosophical, religious and moral point of view..." (Humanist Manifesto, I and II, page 3). They are evangelistic in their endeavor: "to establish such a religion is a major necessity to the present", (ibid, p. 8).

Decrees

The following are some of its basic decrees. About God: "We find insufficient evidence for belief in the existence of a super-natural; it is either meaningless or irrelevant to the question... We begin with humans not God, nature not deity" (ibid, p. 16). About ethics: "moral values derive their source from human experience. Ethics is autonomous and situational, needing no theological or ideological sanction" (p. 17).

Humanism has undergone many recurring resurrections. Its progression is delineated in Rom. 1.18-31. It began in refusing to honor God, who had "manifested" Himself unto man, and the contemporary evil ingratitude. From these roots came darkened perception and ineptness to reason. Foolishly God was dethroned and absurdly man was enthroned. Having substituted the creature for the Creator, Truth as exchanged for Lie. This resulted in the perverted becoming the normal, the abhorrent becoming acceptable, coarseness become cultural and the abusive being excused.

The Humanist views himself as his own saviour. He establishes Truth-reality, judges his own conduct, and offers his own "plan of salvation". "Man is at last becoming aware that he alone is responsible for the realization of the world of his dreams, that he has within himself the power for its achievement. He must set intelligence and will to the task" (ibid p. 10).

A Word Of Caution

The measure of morality is the holiness of God (I Peter 1:15). In teaching holiness it is a serious mistake to substitute the relative holiness of the Christian for the



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absolute and unchanging holiness of God. The measure or standard of holy living is not the practice of Christians; it is the character of God. This mistake is an easy one to make.

Obscenity, indecency, coarseness and abusiveness are determined by the righteousness of God; not by laws, customs and practices of brethren. For example, modest apparel is measured by "godliness" (I Tim. 2: 9, 10) rather than the accepted appearance of Christians. Coarse language is not judged by the accepted speech of saints. To hold up as an ensign the life-style of Christians of any age is to raise a fallible standard which is doomed to defeat and will fail in its purpose. Let us preach the Truth; not our view of it. Let us declare the holiness of God and not the life-style of believers.

Deployment

Slowly and steadily Humanism has exercised its influence upon mankind. It is a virulent and slow evil. Like cancer, often it has done its deadly work before it is detected. Humanistic morality in its earliest stages often appears harmless.

To accomplish its ends Humanism has employed three modern conditioners: entertainment, education and environment. No Christian is beyond the influence of these three conditioners. A "conditioner" is an influence which causes something to become manageable toward a certain end. Hair conditioner manages one's hair so that the comb can do its work. Body conditioning influences muscles to become adept in running, hitting the ball and scoring points.

Entertainment conditions the part of the mind which is easier to influence: the desires. Modern science fiction movies, such as "E. T." and "Close Encounters of the Third Kind", subtly and surely make plausible the theory of Evolution. Television has gone a long way in making Biblical morality appear ridiculous. The rightness of marriage before living together is portrayed as absurd. The life-style of many Christians has been compromised by this powerful conditioner.

To make changes in our living, most of us need some "reason" to justify the change. Humanistic education has conditioned Christians intellectually to move their moral guide lines. It is one thing to adjust the application of a principle; it is another thing to change the principle. As people well aware of the great benefits of education many brethren have become susceptible to Humanistic education without knowing it. Humanism is not amoral; it is a morality which frees man from Biblical morality and permits him, in a given situation, to determine his own principles. "Let this sink into your ears." "... much of our moral freedom is good: it is pleasant to be relieved of theological terrors, to enjoy without qualm the pleasures that harm neither others nor ourselves, and to feel the tang of the open air upon our liberated flesh" (**Lessons from History**, Will Durant, p. 42).

Many Christians ignore the fact that most of America's education is either thorough going Humanism or, at least, the majority of modern teachers have been fundamentally influenced by it. Humanism presents a reason for doing as one pleases. The Bible presents a

reason for doing what pleases God.

Environment conditions the will of a person. Environment is the total circumstances of one's societal living. Each of us is highly susceptible to the influence of the group. "Everyone does it" has long been an excuse for changing moral action. The will to resist peer pressure requires more than human strength.

Defeat

Resisting humanism is not impossible, though it is difficult. The "inner man" must be empowered by God (Eph. 3: 16). While the Christian cannot isolate himself from the world he can insulate himself from its pervasiveness. He looks to God for wisdom. He neither rationalizes his conduct nor allows the situation to decide what is right. Victory over the world comes by faith (I John 5: 4) and faith comes by hearing the word truly.

Therefore, study the Bible; especially books such as Proverbs which again and again declare that the fundamental factor in wisdom is the "fear of Jehovah". The first commandment for the wise and good man is to do what is right. "Right" is merely the other side of the coin of Truth. "Hear (wisdom)...; and the opening of my lips shall be right things" (Prov. 8: 6).

Discipline is essential to defeating Humanism. Discipline is training. It is deliberately doing the right thing when options are faced. It can be developed by the strengthening of one's will-power.

Heed the warning of God; observe the lives of those who did not. To go against "wisdom" is not only ill-advised, it is disastrous. "But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death" (Prov. 8: 36).

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Obscene Movies And TV Programs

Few things frighten me any more than the passing comments I hear brothers and sisters in the Lord make about movies and TV programs they have permitted themselves to see. Just when I believe there may be a deepening spirituality among the Lord's people in our day, someone, who is thought to be a part of the real strength of his or her congregation tells me what they rented at the video store last weekend or what they watched on TV last night — and I find it difficult to be optimistic at all about where we are headed as a people. When it comes to telltale signs of spiritual shakiness, there are none more disturbing than the problem we have with obscene movies and TV programs.

How Bad Is It?

It is an obvious fact that pop entertainment has gone from bad to worse in the matter of obscenity (as well as violence and secular philosophy, which are, of course, no less a problem). In regular broadcast television, not to mention cable TV or the movies, the language has grown increasingly profane and vulgar, producers are daily pushing the limits on nudity and sexual content, homosexuality has come out of the closet and onto the tube, and the "moral" values that are promoted are farther and farther away from anything the serious Christian can identify with. What is being pumped into our living rooms has changed for the worse so noticeably that even one secular writer previewed the current TV season with an article entitled, "The Family Hour Fades to Black."

But the worsening of movie and TV content itself is not the whole problem. The **acceptance** of this fare by supposedly strong, faithful Christians is what is truly alarming. We may have an admirable devotion to the Lord in many things, but when it comes to entertainment we are bowing before the altar of television; we **are**

going to the theater to see virtually any movie we believe we will enjoy; we are letting our kids watch nearly anything they want at the movies or on TV (including MTV); we are paying to get the cable movie channels, which rarely carry anything the Christian can afford to be interested in; and we are renting movies at the video store that not too many years ago would have been classified pornographic. Basically, we have sold our souls for a mess of footage, and it is impossible to contemplate what has happened without being concerned about the future.

The Worrisome Aspect Of The Problem

Obviously, none of us can say we have been entirely consistent in our entertainment, least of all this writer. To my discredit, I have been places and seen things no Christian ought to. But the thing about the present situation that seems different to me is that I am encountering **mature** saints who not only watch obscene movies and TV programs, but **defend** their practice as perfectly **acceptable** conduct for the Christian! It is one thing to give in to temptation and, when confronted, offer excuses about not being as strong as one should be. But if, as is apparent, we have come around to the view that those who question our viewing habits are the ones with the problem, then we have entered a new and worrisome phase in the battle against obscenity.

Increasingly these days I am hearing responses like the following whenever I express amazement at a movie or TV program a fellow Christian says he has seen:

"Well, it didn't have **much** profanity in it. I hear it so much at work, it doesn't bother me. I just tune it out."

"If it bothers or offends you, then it's not a movie you should see — but it didn't bother me."

"If you can't handle it, you shouldn't see it — but I've been out in the real world enough, I can handle it."

"If it embarrasses you, you shouldn't see it — but I'm mature enough that things like that don't embarrass me."

"We rented it and watched it at home. There's nothing really wrong when it's just us."

Surely we cannot fail to notice the common thread that runs through these remarks; that obscenity is acceptable entertainment for us if we personally have been so "desensitized" that obscenity no longer bothers, offends, or embarrasses us. That we think that way is cause enough for concern. But that we are **pleased** with ourselves for thinking that way is truly frightening. If we have, in fact, lost our sensitivity to obscenity and are patting ourselves on the back because of it, we are not far from qualifying for Paul's description of those "whose glory is in their shame" (Phil 3: 19).

But on the other hand, whether one is bothered or embarrassed has very little to do with the question of whether one should or should not indulge in certain entertainment. It is safe to say the Lord, if He were on



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earth today, would be strong enough to "handle" far more than any of us — but you would not catch Him entertaining Himself with the stuff we watch. What it comes down to is that we have turned decency upside down when we start defining how spiritually mature and strong we are in terms of how little embarrassment we feel in the presence of obscenity.

Whether we realize it or not, we have adopted the basic posture of the Gnostic libertines of the first century. These were brethren who believed themselves to be a select group of Christians who had achieved such a high plane of strength and enlightenment that they could indulge in immorality and not be hurt spiritually. They liked to think the amount of fleshly indulgence they could "handle" was a sign of their advanced knowledge and sophistication. But John, as well as other inspired writers, called this enticing doctrine what it always is: a lie. He wrote, "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth" (1 Jn. 1: 6).

The NT Admonition To Purity

Need it be pointed out that the Scriptures call us to inner sanctity? Have we forgotten that the Lord said, "Blessed are the **pure** in heart, for they shall see God" (Mt. 5: 8)? Have we forgotten that Paul wrote, "Finally, brethren, whatever things are **true**, whatever things are **noble**, whatever things are **just**, whatever things are **pure**, whatever things are of **good report**, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy — meditate on these things" (Phil. 4: 8)? Whatever any of us individually may or may not be "bothered" by, the passage is still there waiting to be dealt with which says that there are some things not "fitting" for the Christian to dally with, among them "uncleanness" and "filthiness" (Eph. 5: 3, 4). Those around us, whose souls we hope to reach with the gospel, deserve to see in us a better example. We owe it to them, as well as to the Lord and ourselves, to **demonstrate** that the way of purity is the better path of those we could travel.

A WORTHY WOMEN

By Darlene Craig

This is a well-written book with a chapter on each verse of Proverbs 31:10-31. The author is the wife of a faithful gospel preacher, a mother, homemaker, and grandmother. Her writing style is fresh and her research is extensive. Her applications are alive to the needs of godly women today. This 220 page paperback book is attractively bound, the layout is neat and the printing is excellent.

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(From Page 3)

the closet. Some of the attire and language used today cannot be described. Children are being physically and sexually abused and even killed (abortion) by their parents.

Rogland R. Hegstad wrote, "It has become fashionable to be 'broadminded,' a category into which more and more segments of society are striving to fit. Broad-mindedness is the keynote of our generation.

"Hollywood broad-mindedly hustles the philandering husband and the faithless wife on to the wide screen for the applause of the broad-minded masses. The chiseling cheat has his applauders, the price-fixing executive his apologists. Minds have been stretched so broad that in many cases little of moral substance seems to be left between the ears" (*Reader's Digest*, May 1991).

Must We Tolerate Indecency As "Freedom"?

"No, the real issue is decency — what all civilized societies demand. The real threat is not what might happen to the 'artistic rights' of a few lightweights, but what is happening to a society out of touch with its own standards and values. We are being desensitized to almost every form of degenerate behavior. We are being beguiled, in the name of 'freedom,' into accepting the degeneracy as 'the price we have to pay.'

"Pardon me, but no, it isn't. Giving in to the lowest common denominator is not what freedom is all about. Freedom is not just about doing and saying whatever one pleases, but also about responsibilities for the common welfare. It is about exercising our right not to put up with the depravities that weigh us down. Indeed, there is no freedom at all when there is no respect for human dignity" (John Underwood, "How Nasty Do We Wanna Be?", *Reader's Digest*, May 1991). I can only add an "amen".

Overview

This special examines the problem of indecency in our society. This article looks at the problem from a textual analysis of living in perilous times. *Harry Pickup, Jr.* demonstrates how that humanism is at the heart of the problem. *Gary Henry* deals with the obscenity found on the television and movie screens. *Frank Himmel* deals with some of the filthy lyrics that come from those in the music industry. *Colly Caldwell* deals with gross sexual perversion from the textual point of view. *Ed Bragwell* shows how the immodesty of the day violates plain Bible principles. *Hiram Hutto* deals with Biblical instructions about profanity as well as addressing the question of why people use coarse language. *Leon Mauldin* looks at the deplorable problem of child abuse. He deals with the text as well as up-to-date statistics.

We hope you find this special helpful in your own life and will purchase extra copies to pass on to others.

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Filthy Music

Have you ever wondered why God made music a part of our worship? Prayer is the expression of our heart's desire to God, including praise, thanksgiving, and requests for aid. The Lord's Supper keeps Jesus' death ever before us. Studying God's will is essential to knowing how to please Him. But why singing?

Singing is a natural expression of happiness, a fitting way to express our joy and our adoration for the Lord. Yet perhaps something else is involved. Music has a unique ability to touch our emotions, thereby enhancing the expression of our thoughts. What Christian has never felt goose bumps while energetically singing a great hymn such as *Our God, He is Alive*? Music is also a powerful ally in helping our retention. Little children who struggle to memorize the books of the Bible or the apostles can do it with ease when these lists are put to music. These special qualities of music give it great potential for good in serving God. Unfortunately, that same potential can be used to propagate evil when music is used to express ungodly ideas.

The music industry knows this. The late Jimi Hendrix said in an interview with *Life* in October, 1969, "... Music is a spiritual thing of its own.... I can explain anything better by music. You hypnotize people to where they go right back to their original state which is pure positive — like in childhood when you got natural highs. And when you get people at that weakest point, you can preach into the subconscious what we want to say."

The year my grandmother was born, the hit songs were *She'll Be Comin' Round the Mountain* and *My Wild Irish Rose*. In contrast, *Rolling Stone* listed as the number one song at the beginning of this year, *I'll Be Your Baby Tonight*. Clearly the message is changing, and not for the better.

The Extremes

Heavy metal music is saturated with **Satanism**. It preaches against Christ while encouraging Satanic worship and the occult. Go to your local music store and take a look at the boxes the CD's and cassettes come in. They are covered with Satanic pictures and symbols. The names of the groups themselves are revealing: The Almighty, Black Sabbath, Faith No More, Judas Priest, Metal Church, Nazareth, and Testament to

name a few. Now flip the box over and read the names of the songs. They include *Bring Your Daughter to the Slaughter*, *Dead Babies*, *Devil's Child*, *Flesh and Blood Sacrifice*, *Hell Ain't a Bad Place to Be*, *Living in Sin*, *Sin After Sin*, *Social Disease*, and *Suicide Solution*. These songs advocate everything from perverted sex (including necrophylia in *Cold Ethyl*) to human sacrifice to pyromania to suicide. The only rule seems to be to have no rules. The most appropriate title I found was a Black Sabbath song, *We Sold Our Soul for Rock 'n Roll*.

Gross sexual perversion is not uncommon in rock music. One of the top music videos of 1985 was *Hot for Teacher* by Van Halen. It depicted middle school age boys fantasizing about their teacher stripping to a bikini and dancing around on top of the desks. Several performers, such as Prince and Madonna, build their entire act around sex, exposing themselves as much as they can get away with. Prince's songs include *Do It All Night*, *Let's Pretend We're Married*, and *Darling Nikki*, which is about a girl standing in a hotel lobby engaging in self-gratification while looking at a magazine. Madonna's *Like a Virgin* has been well-publicized. One of her latest videos, *Justify My Love*, was even too raunchy for MTV to broadcast!

Profanity and vulgarity are also on the increase, especially with the emergence of rap music. 2 Live Crew's *Nasty As They Wanna Be* has brought on the ire of many communities. Unfortunately that wrath was insufficient to produce a conviction on obscenity charges last year. Despite the fact that the song contains graphic references to body parts and continual expletives (one term occurs over two hundred times!), Luther Campbell's attorney convinced a jury that this piece has artistic value. He said the problem is that some white folks just do not understand the culture!

The Norm

You will not hear most of the songs I have mentioned thus far on your local radio station. Even broadcasters realize that such lyrics are on the fringe and have limited appeal. (On the other hand, a few stations specialize in heavy metal music.) However, I am not sure that some of what is played on top forty stations is much improvement. The lyrics tend to be less graphic, but sin is still glamorized and advocated. And perhaps therein lies a greater danger. The more subtle the appeal of sin, the more easily it finds its way into our hearts. As we listen to these songs over and over we may become enamored with their catchy tunes and punch lines while ignoring the evil they promote. Remember, music makes the words stick. We are probably absorbing more than we realize.

Of course, not all top forty music is so subtle. For example, one of Heart's recent hits was *All I Wanna Do Is Make Love to You*. It is about a woman driving along in a rainstorm. She sees a man standing by the road and offers him a ride. Without even asking his name, she heads straight for a motel where they commit fornication



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(obviously that is not what they call it). In the chorus she cries out, "All I wanna do is make love to you, say you will, you want me too." Parents, is that the sentiment you want circulating in the head of your son or daughter when they are out with other young people? Later the song refers to seeds and trees. If we do not want the tree of immorality, we had better do something about the seed we are planting in our minds.

Sex is indisputably the common thread in rock music. But let no one think that rock has a monopoly on filthy music. Country music is right along beside it. Its two favorite themes seem to be honky tonkin' and adultery. Here is a list of titles I found on country albums: *Heaven Is Just a Sin Away*; *I Got a Right to Be Wrong*; *If Loving You is Wrong I Don't Want to Be Right*; *It Don't Feel like Sinner to Me*; *It's All Wrong, But It's All Right*; *Lay My Body Down*; *The Power of Positive Drinkin'*; *Whiskey Bent and Hell Bound*; *Your Cheaten' Heart*. Now folks, is there any difference between a country boy crooning about tears in his beer and a rocker screaming about escaping through drugs?

Not even classical music is blameless. More than a few operas are stories of lust and murder. Of course, most of us have no idea what in the world those folks are singing anyway!

The Solution

What can be done about filthy music? Some have advocated a rating system similar to what is used in the film industry. Albums with sexually explicit language or profanity or those that advocated violence would be identified with warning labels. That is not a bad idea. However, if the music industry does not do a better job rating its product than the film industry does, "safe" albums will not necessarily be safe at all. Even conservative worldly standards are far behind God's standard.

Shall we burn all of our records, tapes, and CD's? No, though that might be appropriate in a few cases, like the Ephesians' occult books (Acts 19:19). But not all rock or country music is bad. I am not crusading against any particular type of music. I am simply pointing out the ungodly influences that exist so that we may counter them.

The simple solution is that we need to learn to be selective about what we listen to. Just as we must be selective about what we watch on television (sometimes the best choice is channel off), and what movies we go see or rent to bring home, and what books we read, likewise we must be selective about the songs we listen to. When filthy music comes on, change the station or turn it off. Do not just sit there and listen thinking you will be unaffected. You are paying greater attention than you realize.

One more thing: we need to be as selective about the particular station we are listening to as we are about the music. Disc jockeys are getting increasingly bold. Profanity and bathroom humor are commonplace on some stations, especially during prime listening hours. It seems as though there is nothing that some of them will not talk about or joke about.

Parents, pay attention to what your children are listening to. Young people, do not dismiss this article as

the ravings of some old fogey preacher. It does make a difference what you fill your mind with. "Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life" (Pro. 4:23). "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things" (Ph. 4:8).

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Gross Sexual Perversions

"And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own habitation, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day; as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh, reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries" (NKJV, Jude 6-8).

Honorable Sexual Fulfillment

The wonderful God of heaven designed human beings with emotions and desires which complement all the noble purposes of life. Conjugal bonding to another who provides companionship and help through life is honorable. Bringing children into the world is honorable. Giving and receiving sexual fulfillment and happiness is honorable. These activities are only honorable, however, when accomplished within a relationship designed and ordained by God to protect both their honor and the honor of the persons involved. "**Marriage** is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled" (Heb. 13: 4). When Paul responded to the questions of the Corinthians, he said, "because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another..." (1 Cor. 7: 2-5). Complete sexual sharing between married partners is a part of God's great plan for our happiness and fulfillment.

Sexual Perversions

Isn't it sad, therefore, that so many in our society **are** not only winking at aberrant, deviate sexual practices but are also openly promoting them. Fornication, adultery and wife-swapping (both through remarriage and outside of marriage), homosexuality, lesbianism, rape and violent sexual abuse of women and children (both in

and out of the home), and sexual harassment (in schools, the workplace, and other social contexts) seem to top the list of sexual perversions we hear about most today. These abuses are fed by pornography (on film and on paper), entertainment houses (single bars, theaters, discotheques which exploit unclothed women under the guise of dancing, etc.), and a media which constantly bombards our society with pictures glorifying unclothed men and women engaged in activities and relationships which are immodest and immoral.

All such are properly identified as sin. They are sinful because they constitute rebellion against God's laws and because they violate God's plan for the fulfillment of sexual desires in honorable marriage. It is no wonder that these people are unfulfilled and unhappy sexually. The people most fulfilled are those who are committed to honor and to their mate's fulfillment. Those who are happiest are those who dedicate themselves to making their mates happy.

Jude's Identification Of Sexual Perversion

Jude dealt with ungodly men who, among other things, turned "the grace of our God into licentiousness" (vs. 4). One way in which they evidenced their basic unbelief was in their attitudes toward sexual immorality. Sexual perversion is not new. As it increases in a given society, however, that people becomes increasingly in danger of annihilation at the hand of God. Jude used two expressions to identify the sexual perversion of the people of Sodom, Gomorrah and surrounding cities (vs. 7).

The first is the term **porneia**. This word is translated "fornication" (KJV) or "sexual immorality" (NKJV). It is a general term which encompasses "every kind of unlawful sexual intercourse" (Arndt & Gingrich). Unchastity in sexual conduct in or out of marriage is identified as **porneia**. In this passage, **porneia** refers to the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah. **Porneia** is perversion of God's plan.

The other expression is translated "gone (or "going," **KJV**) after strange flesh." The men of Sodom called to Lot and asked, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may know them carnally" (Gen. 19: 5). Their **porneia** took the form of homosexuality. The consequences to them was destruction. They are set forth with "the angels who did not keep their proper domain" as examples of those who suffer "the vengeance of eternal fire."

Jude's Characterization Of Perverts

Having identified the perversion, Jude proceeds to characterize the perverts. He cuts to the heart of human sexual crimes against God by specifying four integral problems with their mentality.



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First, they are called "dreamers" ("filthy dreamers," KJV). People involved in sexual perversion of any of the types identified in this article are dreaming. Their supposed pleasure is not real. Fornicators "dream" of excitement which is temporary at best. They fanaticize momentary ecstasy which cannot bring lasting honorable satisfaction and fulfillment because it is based on selfish, physical enjoyment rather than joy in sharing true love with one's wife. Both the involvement and the outcomes are imagined.

Second, they "defile the flesh." Paul said to the Corinthians that "the body is not for sexual immorality" and that "he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body" (1 Cor. 6: 13, 18). To the Romans he said "God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves" (Rom. 1: 24). He continued the same theme when he said to the Thessalonians that they "should abstain from sexual immorality that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor" (1 Thes. 4: 3, 4).

Remember, sexual perversions are not honorable. Marriage is honorable. That, of course, reminds us that when one marries, he/she becomes "one flesh" with the mate. When one "defiles the flesh," "sins against his own body," and "dishonors his body," he does that against his wife because she is now one flesh with him. It is from that consideration that we must recognize adultery as well as homosexuality as a "gross sexual perversion!"

Third, Jude says that the perverted mentality "rejects authority." The mind which says, "I will do what I wish to my own pleasure," is rebellious. The individual who goes to bed with another than his/her mate rebels against the law of God. The person who seeks sexual pleasure with one of the same sex totally disregards both the law and the righteousness which stands behind the law (Rom. 8: 3, 4). Jude goes on to say, "But these speak evil of whatever they do not know; and whatever they know naturally, like brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves. Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah" (Jude 10-11). Go back and study the implications and applications of these two verses to the sexual perversions we are considering.

And fourth, Jude says that they "speak evil of dignitaries." The word "dignitaries" is literally "glories" or "glorious ones." These call what is evil "good" and call what is good "evil." They ridicule those who serve the Lord and make fun of the lives of the faithful. They sometimes blaspheme spiritual beings even slurring the name of God Himself. Such is the nature of those who have degraded themselves to such depths of immorality.

Wicked men are compared by Jude to "spots in your love feasts" (hidden reefs), "clouds without water," "trees without fruit," "raging waves foaming to their own shame," and "wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever" (Jude 12-13). There is no substance to them. The Lord will come "with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their

ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him" (Jude 15). Our instruction is to "keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (Jude 21) and "others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh" (Jude 23). Let us preach against the sins of the flesh! Let us call upon men to repent. And let us remember that when we sing, "Just As I Am," we do not mean that we may REMAIN "Just As We Have Been."

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PROPOSITION: "The Sponsoring church method of evangelism, such as the *ONE NATION UNDER GOD* campaign sponsored by the Sycamore Church of Christ, Cookeville, Tennessee, is authorized by the New Testament."

On August 8, 9 Travis Quertermous of Morley, Missouri will affirm. Dan Richardson of Vanduser, Missouri will deny.

On August 12, 13 Marion W. Ferrell of Charleston, Missouri will affirm. Dick Blackford of Tuckerman, Arkansas will deny.

There will be a question and answer period.

Indecent Dress

Since the fall of man in the garden, men and women have needed to be adequately and decently clothed. When Adam and Eve sinned they became conscious of their nakedness and were ashamed — a consciousness and sense of shame needed in a world invaded by sin. They tried to cloth themselves with aprons of fig leaves, but God clothed them more adequately and decently (Gen. 2: 25-3: 31). It is interesting that the sacred text does not say that the aprons clothed them, but rather the coats or tunics that God made for them.

I heard a brother say that if he could find some of the fruit that Adam and Eve ate, he would pass it out to the sisters by the bushel — so that they would open their eyes and know that they were naked (Gen. 3: 7). I might add to that many are still sewing together less than fig leaves and calling themselves clothed.

Adornment: Inside And Out

Misinterpretations of Peter's teaching about outward adorning (1 Peter 3: 1-4), have led to several extremes. Some conclude that all outward adorning such as wearing gold, braiding the hair, and the like is forbidden. It should be obvious that this is not what Peter meant, or else one could wear **no clothes** because another example given of outward adorning is that of "putting on of apparel." While some versions other than the King James and American Standard say **fine** apparel, **fine** is obviously an interpolation supplied by the translators and is so indicated by italics in the New King James.

This is one of those "not... but..." passages where the "not" portion of the passage may indeed be important, but is not nearly as important as the "but" portion. (John 6: 27 is another example of such a passage). Having correctly understood that the inward adorning is **far more important** than any outward adorning, one must not conclude that outward adorning is of **no** importance. Whoever said that "clothes do not make the man" may have been right, but it is also true that clothes may be a reflection of the man (or woman). The way that we dress sends certain signals about ourselves. This is why godly women should dress as **women professing godliness** (1 Tim. 2: 10). They want to signal their true character before all.

One's dress may reflect one's socio-economic standing (Jas. 2: 1-4). Since, among saints, no partiality should be shown based on this factor, we should not

show favoritism toward one whose clothing may reflect either prosperity or poverty. However, the fact still remains that the way one dresses does say something about the person.

One's dress may reflect one's attitude toward an occasion. Joseph was about to appear before the Pharaoh, so he "he shaved, changed his clothing, and came to Pharaoh" (Gen. 41: 14). Queen Esther wanted an audience with the king, so she "put on her royal apparel" (Esther 5: 1). A wedding guest was expelled from a king's wedding feast for his son for not wearing the wedding garment (which, I am told, was customarily supplied by the host) (Matt. 22: 11, 12). All of this points to the fact that special occasions call for special attention being paid to one's dress. How one dresses for the occasion reflects his attitude toward the occasion.

When we assemble around the Lord's table to commemorate the great sacrifice of our Savior and to otherwise worship Him, is this not a very special occasion? Is it a casual event? Yet, I sometimes see brethren who have good clothes, fitting for other special occasions, and who are careful to arrange their appearance for those occasions, attend the worship services looking like they had just come from or were heading to a hog-killing. Casual occasions may call for casual and unkept appearance, but publicly worshipping the Lord is no such occasion.

Dress And Character

One's dress may reflect one's personal character traits. For example, if one, with the means to do otherwise, habitually appears in public with unkept clothing, hair and general appearance; it is a pretty good indication of laziness and carelessness on his part.

Likewise, one may indicate either godliness or ungodliness by the way one dresses. Solomon speaks of seeing a young man devoid of understanding meeting a woman with the **attire of a harlot** (Prov. 7: 6-9). Judah mistook Tamar for a harlot because of her outward appearance (Gen. 38: 14, 15). This did not justify Judah's action, but it does show that one's outward appearance can send out ungodly signals. How often have I heard it said of some sisters that they dress "like street walkers" and find it hard to disagree. A person who professes godliness should dress as a person professing godliness (1 Tim. 2: 10). If Christians are not the wrong kind of people and do not want to be identified as such, then they should not signal by the way that they dress that they are.

The way Christians dress should indicate a sense of modesty, propriety and moderation because these traits should be a part of their very character. Three significant Greek words, referring to a Christian's character, are used relative to a Christian woman's apparel in 1 Tim. 2: 9: **kosmios**, **aidos**, and **sophrosune**. The way one dresses is indicative of whether the person possesses these characteristics or not. **Kosmios** ("modest") means "orderly, well-arranged, decent, modest... of good behavior (1 Tim. 3: 2 KJV)" (Vine). **Aidos** ("propriety" - NKJ,



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"shamefacedness" - KJV, "shamefastness" - ASV, "decency" - NIV is "that modesty which is 'fast' rooted in the character" (Vine). **Sophrosune** ("moderation" - NKJ, "sobriety" - KJV, ASV) is a "habitual inner self-government, with its constant rein on the passion and desires..." (Vine).

Those professing godliness are to be governed by chastity or purity (Greek **hagnos** - Phil 4: 8; 1 Tim. 5: 22; Titus 2: 5; James 3: 17; 1 Pet 3: 2; 1 John 3: 3), rather than sensuality. They seek to conceal rather than shamefully (or shamelessly) revealing their nakedness (cf. Ex. 28: 42; Rev. 3: 18; 16: 15). They should refrain from sexually provocative clothing or gestures (cf. Prov. 7: 10, 11, 21-23). By doing this they can keep themselves pure and avoid being a stumbling block to others (cf. Matt. 5: 28; 18: 6-9).

What We Are Seeing

More and more Christians are dressing in a sexually provocative manner. In fact, Christians who have been taught that sexually provocative clothing is wrong and still want to wear such clothing to be "in style" are about the only ones who try to deny that such is provocative. Most people in the world freely admit that this is why they find such apparel appealing. Sex appeal is the name of the game with many of the fashion designers of this world.

Many wear clothing in public that barely stops short of complete nudity. The shame of their nakedness is revealed either by clothing that is too brief or too tight. I sometimes see sisters out in their yards, out shopping, around recreational areas, at beaches and pools or at sporting events (both fans and participants) that expose at least as much flesh as they would in their underwear. I also see brothers at the same places in very short shorts without a shirt. If all of this is decent or modest apparel — pray tell what could be immodest or indecent and still be called apparel. Remember there is such a thing as "modest apparel", necessarily implying the reality of "immodest apparel."

Others wear clothing, even to church services, that may not be as brief but is about as revealing. Skirts and dresses that are so short that make it impossible for one to stand or sit in a decent manner and revealing as much or more flesh than the shorts mentioned above. Dresses, skirts, pants, and tops that are near skin tight that reveal the very form of private parts are all too frequently worn. Dresses and skirts, though they may be nearly to the ankles, are sometimes slit so as to reveal the entire leg with every step. Dresses very low cut at the top are not uncommon. A person who defends the design of such clothing as decent and non-sensual is either woefully naive or shamefully dishonest.

Brothers and sisters, we need to be careful about how we dress; but, more importantly, we need to constantly examine our hearts so as to develop and protect that basic sense of decency and shamefastness that should characterize Christians — then dress accordingly.

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Abusing Children

There are no doubt many factors involved in child abuse (abortion, physical abuse, sexual abuse), but one of the greatest determinants is what Paul calls being "without natural affection" (Romans 1: 31). Our widespread problem of child abuse, and the heartless, unfeeling lack of natural affection that accompanies it was a plight of major proportions in New Testament times:

"*Storge* was the special Greek word for family love. It was quite true that this was an age in which family love was dying. Never was the life of the child so precarious as at this time. Children were considered a misfortune. When a child was born, the child was taken and laid at the father's feet. If the father lifted up the child that meant that he acknowledged it. If he turned away and left it the child was literally thrown out. There was never a night when there were not thirty or forty abandoned children left in the Roman forum. Every night in life children were literally thrown away" (Barclay, *The Letter to the Romans*, p. 32). [Seneca wrote]... children who are born weakly and deformed we drown" (Ibid, pp. 32-33).

Some want to leave the impression that the issue of abortion is so complicated that no one could possibly say what is right or wrong; that each person will have to decide for himself. The truth is that it is not such a complicated issue. It is quite simple to determine from the word of God what is right or wrong. We just have complicated ideas which create confusion about a fundamental moral issue. People get themselves into complicated situations; the way of the transgressor is hard (Prov. 13: 15). But truth is attainable "if any man willeth to do His will" (John 7: 17).

Abortion is shedding innocent blood. God hates those who do so (Prov. 6: 17). Abortion violates the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill." Murderers will have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death" (Rev. 21: 8).

There can be no doubt that God recognizes the unborn as a living child. When Elizabeth was pregnant, the unborn "babe" leaped in her womb at the salutation of Mary (Luke 1: 41). The same word (*brephos*) is used to denote the newborn child (Luke 2: 12, 16) as well as the older child (Luke 18: 15). Consider also Psalm 139: 13: "For Thou didst form my inward parts; Thou didst weave me in my mother's womb" (NASB).

Abortion Statistics

How extensive is the problem of abortion? Perhaps you have seen the statistics that show that since 1775, 1, 186, 654 American soldiers have been killed in wars, but from 1973-1989, over 25, 000, 000 abortions have occurred in the United States. The proportion and magnitude of the problem is seen in that "nationally, one third of all pregnancies are terminated by abortion" (NFD Journal, Apr. 84).

When can a baby be aborted? Maura K. Quinlan, chief staff counsel for Americans United for Life was quoted in the July 1987 issue of *Focus on the Family* as saying, "While most Americans know that abortion is legal on demand in the first three months of pregnancy, very few realize that it is also legal—for almost any reason—until birth." It is estimated that between eight and ten percent of abortions take place during the second and third trimester.

Child Sexual Abuse

It is difficult to obtain precise, reliable statistics on sexual abuse of children, because of "significant under-reporting" of cases. But the best and most recent information available indicates that in 1989, of the 2. 4 million reports of child abuse and neglect recorded nationally by child welfare agencies, that 16%, or 384, 000 were reports of sexual abuse. The total reports indicated a 10% increase from 1988 to 1989 (The National Resource Center on Child Sexual Abuse).

Other statistics state that the "largest retrospective study of adult populations estimated that approximately 27% of women and 16% of men had experienced some form of childhood sexual mistreatment/abuse" (ibid.).

These statistics are similar to those reported by Andre Bustanoby in his booklet, *When You've Been Abused*: "... one in four girls will be a victim of sexual abuse by the time she is eighteen" (p. 13).

Further, a very high percentage of perpetrators are known by child victims. "Fewer than 20% of children are abused by strangers" (NRC). Mrs. Marilyn Adler, Miss America of 1957, spoke to a prevention and treatment group (May 8, 1991), telling "how she'd been sexually abused by her father between the ages of five and eighteen, but buried it in her mind." She had been silent about the abuse for thirty years.

This silence is a common peculiarity to incest and other sexual abuse. "The silence can have a deadly effect. Though anxiety may be masked for years, the secret is a psychological time-bomb (emphasis mine, L. M.). Guilt, confusion, depression and passivity can suddenly explode into self-destructive behavior, even suicide" (Bustanoby, p. 54).

Physical Abuse Fatalities

Do you remember the Baby Doe case that attracted



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national attention in April 1982? A baby boy was born with Down's Syndrome, and an esophageal fistula that prevents food from passing to the stomach. Acting on the advice of their obstetrician, the parents refused corrective surgery, and denied their baby intravenous nourishment and water. Several families offered to adopt him, but they were refused. He cried from hunger the first four days. Then he was too weak to cry any longer. He died six days after his birth. Sadly, this was not a notable exception.

In Michigan, sixty-two children were abused to death between January 1, 1984, and December 31, 1988. Tragically, nearly one-third of these lived in families that had previously been reported to the Child Protective Services (*The Detroit News and Free Press*, Aug. 18, 1990).

Abandonment

Increasingly we hear of cases of child abandonment. In Texas, Mike Cocannon, a 35 year-old lawyer went into a store for only thirty minutes; when he returned to his car he discovered that someone had left a nine pound baby boy, wrapped in a piece of cloth, in his front seat.

A Child Protective Services supervisor was quoted as saying, "I had a case where the mother met some guys at a fast-food place. She asked them to watch her one-year old baby while she went off to buy diapers. It was the last they saw of her."

In Alabama, in the three months between December, 1989, and February, 1990 four newborn babies were abandoned. A Jefferson County social worker was quoted as saying, "We get millions of calls about abandoned babies. Everybody wants to adopt them" (*Birmingham Post Herald*, Feb. 18, 1990).

Infant Drug Addiction

February's *Reader's Digest* contained an article entitled "Kids Who Can't Say No." It told how expectant mothers who smoke "crack" (crystallized cocaine) force the drug, with all of its effects, upon their developing infants. Also, the amniotic fluid is contaminated by crack byproducts. The article referred to resulting birth defects, such as Ronald, whose head was twenty percent smaller than normal, and Tony (two pounds at birth), who was born with an incurable liver disease, and consequently died at three months. Babies whose mothers smoked crack are more likely to be born prematurely.

The Problem And The Divine Solution

Our adversary the devil perseveres in his work of destroying souls (1 Pet. 5: 8). He is never idle. "Band-aids" are not sufficient to quench the fiery darts of the evil one. What is needed is the whole armor of God (Eph. 6: 10-18). Surface cures, such as "sex education" courses, do not address the real problem. Abortion, and physical and sexual abuse grows out of a heart of rebellion and disobedience to the will of God.

When there is a lack of faith in God and His word, bedlam and chaos ensue in ones value system. This is seen in the current "animal rights" movement. For

example, a newspaper cartoon, which was not intended to be funny, but make you think, depicted two women carrying signs. One sign read, "No Furs". The other sign contained the words, "Stop Abortion". The animal rights activist, with the "No Furs" sign, said to the "pro-life" woman, "I don't understand why you're so upset. It's not like they're killing minks or anything..."

1 Thess. 4: 3 reads, "For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality." It is the one who disregards or even shows contempt for such warnings that is faced with the question of what to do now that an unwanted conception has taken place, or has to deal with the problems of incest. The solution is to listen to and obey God's Word (Gal. 5: 19; Heb. 13: 4). God's answer to the problem of child abuse is that the older women teach the younger women to love their children (Titus 2: 3-5). The only solution is more teaching and living of the principles of God's Word. Only this will "turn the hearts of the fathers to the children" (Lk. 1: 68).

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Coarse Language

"A rap group is declared obscene. Comics get condemned by pressure groups. Serious movies garner X ratings. A Cardinal of the church blames a rock singer for teen suicides. In a four-letter world, what's a citizen to do? See it in perspective, and take it in stride. *Another view*: Entertainers should censor themselves before the state does it for them." With these words in its May 7, 1990 issue, *TIME* magazine previews its feature article on "Dirty Words, America's Foul-Mouthed Culture." When a subject has become so prominent as to be put on the cover of *TIME* it is certain that the subject must be of no small dimension. And while most of the article dealt with the entertainment world and its "foul-mouth," we can rest assured that coarse language is not limited to that area. It is in the work place, in newspapers, the songs, the literature, television, movies, news programs, on radio and television, sports programs, and what is saddest of all, on the tongues of some who are supposed to be Christians. Some expressions have become so prevalent as to seem as normal as breathing.

The Bible's Teaching

While the foregoing is true, it is certainly not because the Bible is unclear in its teaching on this subject. Consider these passages:

Exodus 20:7. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain."

Leviticus 19:12. "Ye shall not... profane the name of thy God."

Leviticus 19:14. "Thou shalt not curse the deaf."

Psalms 10:7. "His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and oppression; under his tongue is mischief and iniquity."

Psalms 62:4. "... they bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly."

Psalms 109:17. "Yea, he loved cursing, and it came to him; and he delighted not in blessing, and it was far from him."

Ephesians 4:29. "Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth, but such as is good for edifying as the need may be, that it may give grace to them that hear."

Ephesians 5:3-4. "... all uncleanness ..., let it not even be named among you, as becometh saints; nor filthiness, nor foolish talking, or jesting, which are not befitting."

James 3:9-10. Concerning the tongue, "Therewith bless we the Lord and Father; and therewith curse we men, who are made after the likeness of God: out of the same mouth cometh forth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be."

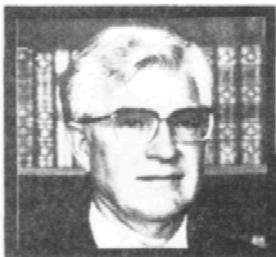
Various Forms Of Coarse Language

1. *Profanity*. In this, that which is sacred and worthy of reverence is treated with contempt or without any sense of respect. Here perfectly good words, in their proper context, are used in an irreverent and degrading manner. For example, in Mark 16:16 Jesus said, "He that believeth not shall be *damned*." Everyone knows what the word *damned* means in this passage, but that certainly is not the way it is profanely used. And when the Bible says, "the wicked shall be turned into *hell*" (Psalms 19:17) we understand the meaning of this word, but profanity uses it for almost every conceivable idea.

And what shall we say about the name "God"? Of all words, surely this one deserves the greatest reverence. Concerning it Jesus said, "Hallowed be thy name" (Matt. 6:9). When Paul said "*My God* shall supply every need of yours" it was used as a sacred term. But have you noticed the extent to which this expression is on nearly every person's tongue? You can hardly see the news on television or hear someone interviewed but what it is used several times. Such *expletives* ought to be *deleted*.

However, this "hard" cursing is not all there is. Many use profanity but in a "softer" and, to them, a less offensive way. These are called euphemisms. Such words as *gosh*, *golly*, *gee*, *gee-whiz*, *darn* are defined as being mild oaths and are simply softened ways of using profanity. Look them up in a dictionary. When the Bible says, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain", the word "vain" simply means "for nothing", and that is precisely what such euphemisms do. Perhaps some will say, "I didn't know that that is what these words mean." Neither does a child know what some bad words he hears at school mean. But, should he be allowed to continue to use them? Of course not, nor should we.

2. *Coarse Language*. It is a sad commentary on the morals of our society that it is willing to take people who tell obscene jokes and use gutter language and put them on a pedestal, consider them to be heroes and pay them millions of dollars per year. What is even sadder is that some members of the church know more about these then they do about outstanding characters in the Bible. It just might be they have spent more time with the former than they have with the latter. The words are such that they could not appear in these pages and ought not to be willingly or voluntarily allowed in the ears of Christians. I thought one time that I would set aside an hour and count the immoralities that were glorified in



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country music, but I just didn't have the stomach for it. Why any Christians should allow such to be drummed into their ears for hours on end is beyond me.

Again, the Bible is quite clear on this. When it condemns "foolish talking or jesting" it is dealing with the very thing that is described as coarse language. While many may think the talk shows, etc. are funny, the Bible says "Fools make a mock of sin" (Prov. 14: 9).

Why?

Several years ago I read an article concerning the research done by some psychologists as to why people use such language. It was their conclusion that "cussing" or "cussers" come in two categories: 1. *Social swearing*, which is the effort to be friendly or one of the gang, and 2. *Annoyance swearing*, stemming from obvious reasons. Since then, I have read of some other reasons (?). 3. *Weakness of intellect*. There are approximately 400, 000 words in the English language. When a person is so limited in his vocabulary that he cannot find decent words from such a vast number to express him-self he certainly betrays a poverty of intellect. 4. *It adds spice to language*. Where did the idea originate that language needs to be spicy? It does need to be with "grace" (Col. 4: 6). But I do not read that it needs to be

with spice.

No doubt there are other excuses for profanity and obscenity but Jesus give the *real* reason when He said, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. The good man out of his good treasure bringeth forth good things: and the evil man out of his evil treasure bringeth forth evil things" (Matt. 12: 34-35). People use bad language because they have evil hearts.

We need to be characterized by the sentiment of David in Psalms 39: 1, "I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue." Let us remember, "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matt. 12: 36-37). We certainly do not want our speech to be such that it will cause us to be like the rich man who lifted up his eyes in torment and cried for Lazarus to "dip the tip of his finger in water, and *cool my tongue*; for I am in anguish in this flame" (Luke 16: 24).

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	324
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(Taken from bulletins and papers
received by the editor)