

Virtual Christian Magazine

hope and encouragement for the real world

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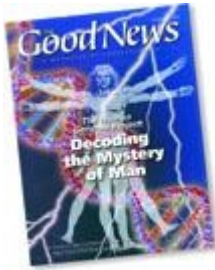
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We are pleased to announce the [July/August 2000, *Good News* magazine...](#)

The Human Genome Project: Decoding the Mystery of Man



In an ambitious effort comparable to the race to put a man on the moon, the Human Genome Project aims to decode each of the 80,000-100,000 genes that comprise the instruction book for forming a human being. With more than 100 trillion cells in our body and possessing a brain with 100 billion neurons, we humans are astoundingly complex. But what are we? Can scientists decode the mystery of what man is?

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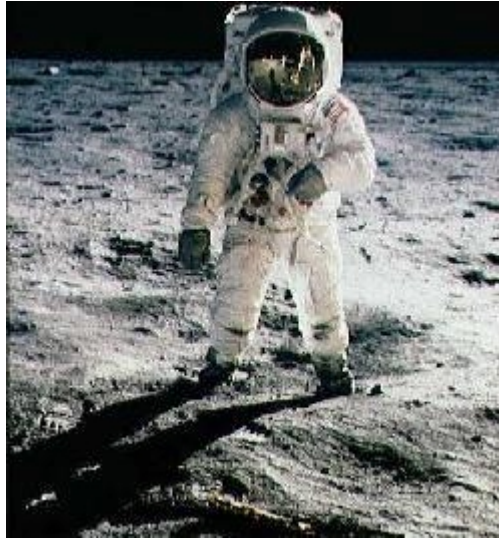
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Virtual Christian MAGAZINE Editorial

Your Mission...

by Mike Bennett



"That's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind..."

When I was 10, Neil Armstrong sent those words echoing across a quarter million miles of space. I felt like I was there with him as he achieved his mission--to be the first man to set foot on the moon. As I write this on the anniversary of the moon landing, I can still feel the excitement of that historic moment.

I've always had a fascination with space missions, from John Glenn to Jean-Luc Picard, with his fictional mission to boldly go where no one had gone before. Great missions have inspired amazing achievements.

In 1969, when Neil Armstrong landed on the moon, my family was also embarking on a mission of our own. We made contact with extraterrestrial life! We started attending church and learning about the great Creator God who made the heavens and the earth. We learned about Jesus Christ, the awesome importance of His first coming to earth, and the vital need for His second coming to set up His Kingdom. This was the good news--the gospel--that Jesus preached (Mark 1:15).

Jesus' second coming plays a pivotal role in the Bible. It will be a truly giant leap for mankind! Jesus Christ told us to pray that God's Kingdom will come (Matthew 6:10) and explained the destructive world events that will lead up to this momentous climax (Matthew 24). After Jesus ascended to heaven, the angels told His disciples, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven,

will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11). That will be the time when Jesus will take charge of the kingdoms of this world (Revelation 11:15).

Neil Armstrong wasn't the only one with a mission. Christ commissioned His followers to proclaim the good news of His Kingdom and to teach those disciples God would call to share in this work (Matthew 24:14; 28:19-20). The mission remains for Christians today. Our troubled world has a greater need for this hope than ever before. Our mission is to tell others about God's mission!

This issue of *VCM* features an article that focuses on Jesus Christ's return. "Storm Without Warning" uses the analogy of the deadly storm that hit Galveston, Texas, 100 years ago, and how the residents could have been spared if the weathermen had known what to look for and had warned everyone. We can know the warning signs of the end of this evil age, and can give a clear message of warning and hope. The article offers an excellent free resource, *Are We Living in the Time of the End?* Just [click here](#) if you haven't already requested it.

Along with the future, *Virtual Christian Magazine* also covers the here and now, the joys and sorrows of striving to represent Jesus Christ in today's world. We welcome your comments and suggestions for making this on-line publication more helpful to you, and for reaching more people with it.

Sometimes *VCM* seems like an impossible mission--so few doing so big a job with virtually no budget. It's made possible by many volunteers donating their time and efforts free of charge as a labor of love. And we are preparing for growth. Already *VCM* is receiving about a thousand additional click-throughs a month just with a \$20 promotion on GoTo.com.

But you dedicated readers can do far more than that. If you've found *VCM* helpful, we have a mission for you. Please let others know about *VCM*.

Spread the word. Tell someone about an interesting article. Put a message about *VCM* at the bottom of your e-mail messages. Put a link on your Web site. Print the magazine out for others who don't have Internet access. Create some buzz.

Our many small steps can add up to a GIANT LEAP for our mission!



The Olympic Ideal

*Sports seem to bring out the highest aspirations and the worst attitudes.
A look at sports, the Olympics--and life.*

By Graemme Marshall



THE OLYMPIC GAMES have become the greatest sports event in the world. No matter how many championship titles an athlete has, to win at the Olympics often remains the supreme ambition. In this intense pursuit of sporting excellence, there are also shining stories of true sportsmanship.

The good side of the Olympics

One of the greatest examples is Emil Zatopek, the great Czech distance runner who actually gave one of his gold medals away.

Zatopek won gold at the 1952 Helsinki Olympics on the same day his wife won with the javelin. They became the first and only married couple ever to win Olympic gold medals on the same day in separate events. He was already the hero of the '52 games, with victories in the 10,000 and 5,000 meters, when he decided to run the marathon--a race he had never run before. During the marathon he asked another runner if the pace was too fast. The reply--it was too slow. So Zatopek upped his speed and won another gold!

Olympic gold had always eluded athlete Ron Clarke. Though he had set 18 world records, in his trips to the Olympics he had collected only a single bronze medal. One day while visiting with the Zatopecs, Clarke was given a small box and told not to open it until he was on his way home.

When Clarke finally opened the package, he found one of Zatopec's gold medals. Attached was a card which read: "Dear Ron, I have won four gold medals. It is only right that you should have one of them. Your friend, Emil." This exemplifies the true spirit of sportsmanship--winning, with a willingness to share.

The last man in the marathon

Sports also give us inspiring examples. The 1968 Mexico City Olympics produced the story of the "Last Man in the Marathon."

A little more than an hour after the winner had crossed the finish line, with only a few thousand spectators left in the stadium, the last runner finally arrived. With a leg bandaged and bloody, he made his painful way around the last lap.

In the press box a columnist wrote: "Today we have seen a young African runner who symbolizes the finest in the human spirit...a performance that gives true meaning to sport...a performance that lifts sport out of the category of grown men playing games...a performance that gives meaning to the word courage.... All honor to John Stephen Akhwari of Tanzania."

Afterward Akhwari was asked why he had endured the pain since there was no chance of winning. He simply said, "My country did not send me to Mexico City to start the race. They sent me to finish."

The dark side

Perhaps the shadowy, manipulative side of sports was worst reflected in the 1936 Olympics. Those first-ever summer games held in Germany were used by the Nazi Party as a gigantic propaganda exercise. The attempt to prove the superiority of the "Aryan race" over athletes from other parts of the world was, however, undermined by the success of Jesse Owens, an African-American who was the undisputed star of the Olympics.

At the 1972 Olympics, Germany again became the focus of the dark side of sports. The expectant joy of those games was shattered when 11 athletes, 5 terrorists and a policeman were killed during the kidnapping of Israeli athletes and the subsequent attempt to rescue them. The day after memorial services, competition continued, but with the Olympic flag at half-mast.

Olympic ideals are often in sharp contrast to world reality. The Olympic motto, *Citius, Altius, Fortius*--Swifter, Higher, Stronger--is all too often marred by the powerful forces of nationalism and the drive for accumulation of team medals. Commercialism seems to have all but overwhelmed the basic intent of the modern Olympics as expressed by its founder, Frenchman Baron de Coubertin. What he said in 1908 has become the modern Olympic Creed, displayed on the scoreboard at opening ceremonies:

"The most important thing in the Olympic Games is not to win but to take part, just as the most important thing in life is not the triumph, but the struggle. The essential thing is not to have conquered but to have fought well." Tragically, the Olympics have become too much a reflection of man's society and the evils that dog his good intentions.

Is good sportsmanship rapidly losing ground?

How recently did you see a golfer fling his club after a bad stroke? Or see a highly paid tennis player throw his racket to the ground, angrily hit a ball into the stands or challenge the referee? Or hear of an athlete accused of using performance-enhancing drugs, or see players fighting on the field? Sadly, we see these things all too frequently. Have we lost sight of de Coubertin's ideals?

Positive examples give us heart. One good example comes from those 1936 Berlin Olympics, where Jesse Owens had won three gold medals and was competing in the long jump. He had fouled twice with only three attempts allowed.

The German champion came over to him and in broken English said, "Jesse, let me make a suggestion. I will place my towel a foot in front of the foul line and you can use this for your take-off. You should then qualify easily."

Owens took his advice, qualified and went on to win another gold. Owens recalled, "It was so gracious of him. After my victory he was the first one to greet me, and we walked arm in arm right in front of Hitler's box."



That example of good sportsmanship helped Jesse Owens set a record of four track and field gold medals in the same Olympics--a record that held for 48 years.

Another good example was one of the great "Golden Milers" who had an attitude toward athletics that made him a symbol of all that was good in sports. John Landy dominated Australian middle-distance running from 1952 to 1956 and was a central figure in the much-publicized quest to break the 4-minute mile, along with Englishman Roger Bannister and American Wes Santee. Landy broke that world mile record in 1954.

In a race leading up to the 1956 Melbourne Olympics, another great distance runner, Ron Clarke, fell. Landy, considering himself to be at fault, immediately stopped running to check on Clarke's condition and to apologize. He then resumed running to chase the field, regained the lead and went on to win. The delay probably cost him another world record.

This is what makes for excellence in sports--great athletes who are also great in character and humanity. We still see this exhibited occasionally, but all too rarely.

Is winning everything?

Sports fans love a winner. We feel up when our team is in the Super Bowl, World Series or

Stanley Cup. Winning teams are in the media spotlight. Champagne and backslapping are the victor's spoils.

Yet winning is often only the difference of a stroke, point, second or goal. Many believe that winning is everything. Winning often takes precedence over a player's health and injuries. Seeking to intimidate the opposition or deliberately trying to injure an opponent is becoming an accepted part of the game.

Paul took the runner's strict training, self-denial and focus on the finish line as requirements for spiritual endeavors as well.

Defeat is often quiet and depressing. Heads are lowered. Feet dejectedly kick the turf. Some losers are not too graceful in defeat. Clubs and rackets are thrown in disgust. Knowing they can't win, some resort to rough play to injure opponents.

What makes for bad attitudes in sports?

Well, the media doesn't help by describing teams in terms of the battlefield: Crushed, blitzed, demoralized, flattened, devastated.

Add to this a growing disrespect for rules and authority. Players argue with umpires and referees. Wild melees involving whole teams are commonplace. It's little wonder that children emulate the adult stars and that violence plagues youth sporting events as well.

Thankfully some do take a stand against obnoxious players. Administrators, officials and the majority of athletes are concerned about violence, but are at a loss as to how to go about cleaning up the mayhem. The motivation to win at any cost is too strong for most sports to change.

The reality is that many players lose more often than they win. Defeat is a frequent visitor in life, and we must come to terms with it. Humble in victory, gracious in defeat is a nice ideal, but one we rarely see in sports--or in life, for that matter.

The intertwined character traits involved in sports and life have not altered since the apostle Paul reflected on athletic training more than 1,900 years ago. He drew analogies from running and boxing, probably referring to the Isthmian Games of the city of Corinth.

Writing to the Corinthians he said: "Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize" (1 Corinthians 9:24-27, New International Version).

Paul took the runner's strict training, self-denial and focus on the finish line as requirements for spiritual endeavors as well. He saw that while a runner's discipline gained him only a wreath of wild celery that soon withered, the true Christian strives for an imperishable crown.

Paul clearly taught that we should strive to win the race of life. But he knew there would be

setbacks and short-term defeats along the way. He was a disciplined person who could gracefully accept defeat or humbly savor the high of a win. "I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound," he said (Philippians 4:12). In defeat the character of the players is highlighted. Some players give of their best, even shine in brilliance, in a losing battle.

Actually, we face defeat more often than we enjoy the triumph of victory. In the voyage of life, humility is a struggle because virtue isn't financially rewarded nor does it receive public acclaim. People would far sooner have the trophy, take the money and drink the champagne. We prefer heady glory to consoling words about bearing up in defeat.

Good sportsmanship in the game of life

Many of these principles apply to everyday life. Whether a participant or spectator, we can apply them by refusing to give in to temper, anger and the human desire to punch or strike back at another.

Develop greater skills to keep out of conflict and win by talent and ability. Some athletes are known for their fair play and self-control. Like them, be a good sport! Winning is a goal to strive for. But winning is only laudable if you can also hold your head up in defeat.

Can we expect the trends toward more obnoxious behavior and increased disrespect for authority to continue? Biblical prophecy doesn't suggest otherwise. Until man's heart, mind and attitude change, his actions will not. It takes character to keep a tight rein on your emotions when you are provoked. It takes character to hold your head high when you've tasted setbacks and defeat.

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Winning is fun, and being challenged by other skilled players helps bring out our best. The desire to win motivates us to work, run, row, bike or swim faster and longer than we have done before. Winning is also competing with yourself against the elements, the mountain or the sea.

Striving to win doesn't have to mean animosity between opponents. The pregame psych-out too often leads to grudges to be settled on the playing field. If winning requires you to cheat, lose your temper, aggravate an injury, abuse the umpire or intimidate your opponent, what really is the quality of your victory?

There is a better way

While all Olympic teams enter the stadium at the opening ceremony carrying their national flags, the closing ceremony is designed to highlight unity as if all the athletes belonged to one nation. This all came about because of 17-year-old John Ian Wing during the 1956 Olympics in Melbourne, Australia. Leading up to those games the world was in turmoil. As teams made their way to Melbourne, Soviet tanks and troops were entering Budapest to put down the Hungarian uprising.

A few days after the opening ceremony John Wing wrote a letter to the organizing committee. He suggested a different kind of march for the closing ceremony: "During the

march there will be only one nation.... What more could anybody want if the whole world could be made as one nation?"

So it was done. And this has become a tradition that has remained for all Olympic Games--athletes from many nations saying farewell as one body, instead of marching separately under their own national flags. What an inspiring thought about how sports could be in the prophesied world of tomorrow!

Most sporting careers are brief, while the game of life is long. That's why we need to learn to be humble in victory and graceful in defeat. If you can play fairly and in a good spirit, then you'll have a good start in playing the more important game of life.



Storm Without Warning

A horrendous storm 100 years ago reminds us that it is vital to know, and let others know, what is coming.

By Bill McIntyre



ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO a weatherman named Isaac Cline was the chief meteorologist in Galveston, Texas. He made history by confidently announcing that no hurricane would ever seriously hurt the city, and that to believe otherwise was to entertain an absurd delusion.

Early on the morning of Saturday, September 8, 1900, Cline was down by the beach timing the arrival of deep-ocean swells larger than any he'd ever seen. He did not know what it meant, but he knew that something extraordinary seemed about to occur.

Eight thousand people were about to die needlessly, but he did not know what the signs meant. The official forecast called for rain followed by clearing.

One person recalled later that the sky that morning had been "gloriously pink, yet containing a fish-scale effect which reflected all of the colors of the rainbow. Never had I seen such a beautiful sky."

Cline was bothered by the swells. Normally the Gulf was placid. That was why the streetcar trestle snaked over the surf and why they'd built Victorian style bathhouses on stilts well into the sea.

Suddenly the sea
..... from fiction

Cline went back to the office and checked his instruments. The barometric pressure had dropped a bit, but not alarmingly.

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suspended terror.*

A telegram was waiting for him from the central weather office telling him to hoist a storm flag. But such warnings were routine; there was still no cause for alarm. It was the ocean swells that had him concerned. He didn't know what they meant.

He returned to the beach and again timed the swells. They were heavier now and pushing seawater well into the neighborhoods nearest the beach. He returned to his office and sent his own telegram stating, "Such high water with opposing winds never observed previously."

Captain George Hix stopped by the weather station to discuss the strange weather. One of Cline's colleagues said there was no cause for uneasiness. It was just a harmless off-spur of a storm that had struck Florida a few days ago. "Well, young man," Hix snorted, "it's going to be the damndest off-spur you ever saw."

But Captain Hix was alone in his anxiety. The rest of the city, adults and children, converged on the beach with delight in their bathing suits. The surf, rocketing off the streetcar trestle, was as good as any fireworks. They were in grave danger, but didn't know it. They were as happy as could be, down by the water. They did not have the information they needed.

"As we watched from the porch," one woman wrote of her childhood experiences, "we were amazed and delighted to see the water from the Gulf flowing down the street. Good, we thought, there would be no need to walk the few blocks to play at the beach; it was right at our front gate."

Suddenly things changed...

It was wonderful, right up until the waves began tearing apart the bathhouses and the shops of the Midway. "Suddenly," one mother recalled, "it wasn't fun anymore." You can almost imagine their expressions changing from cheerfulness, to pure fear.

A visiting businessman took shelter in a train station. For him the inconvenience was made poignant when the body of a child floated into the station.

Abruptly the telegraph lines fell. Cline had had it. He went home. He had a big house on stilts five blocks from the beach. He'd just ride out the storm with his wife and three daughters. When he arrived home, over 50 people were inside. They figured that his house would be the safest.

The surge slowly overflowed the wharf along the north end of the city and began filling the streets of the business district. As the wind shifted, the Gulf suddenly sprang forward as if propelled by an uncoiling spring. A dome of water over 20 feet high surged ashore under rapidly escalating winds. The waters of the sea and the bay met over the city and turned rooftops into small islands.

No one knows what velocity the wind reached. The bureau's



anemometer tore away at 100 miles per hour. The wind sliced off the top floor of a bank, leaving the rest of the building intact. It stripped slate shingles from a house and turned them into scimitars that disembowelled men where they stood. The atmospheric pressure fell so low that a British cotton official was sucked from his apartment window as if he had been up in an airplane when a bomb went off. The storm surge drowned an entire train and demolished an orphanage killing 90 children. Whole neighborhoods were scoured from the face of the earth.



At 6:30 p.m., Cline, ever the weatherman, opened his door to take a look outside. Where once there were streets, there was now open ocean. He didn't see any waves, though, because the storm surge had erected an escarpment of wreckage three stories tall and several miles long that acted as a kind of seawall. It contained carriages, furniture, the streetcar trestle and rooftops that bobbed like the hulls of dismantled ships. It also carried corpses, hundreds of them, perhaps thousands. The wind and sea now pushed this wall toward Cline's house. He heard it coming--a horrendous blend of screams and exploding wood.

Suddenly the sea rose four feet in four seconds. For those inside the Cline house, it was a moment of suspended terror. Four feet was taller than the children. Throughout the remains of the city, parents lifted children onto tables, dressers and pianos. People in single story houses had nowhere to go. The sudden rise of the sea meant death. Suddenly the prospect of watching their children die became very real.

The houses fell gracefully at first. One witness said that the houses collapsed into the Gulf as gently as a mother would lay her infant in a cradle. It was when the current caught the structures and swept them away that the violence occurred, with bedrooms erupting in a tumult of flying wood and glass, rooftops soaring through the air like monstrous kites.

The wall of wreckage pushed before it an immense segment of the streetcar, which struck the Cline house with terrific force. Cline was standing in the center of the living room with his wife and 6-year-old daughter. He was driven backward against the fireplace. He remembered hitting the water and something huge driving him to the bottom. He lost consciousness.

On Sunday, the U.S. Weather Bureau in Washington telegraphed Houston, "Do you hear anything from Galveston?" The answer was, "We have been unable to contact Galveston since 4 p.m. yesterday."

Later that day this report was sent in from Houston, "First news from Galveston just received by train, which could get no closer to the bay shore than six miles. Two hundred corpses counted from the train. Large steamship stranded two miles inland..."

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When Cline awakened on Sunday afternoon he was overjoyed to discover his three daughters alive and well. But his wife was missing. It would be three weeks before her body was recovered.

Eight thousand people died in a matter of a few hours. This was the largest natural disaster

in American history--it dwarfs the San Francisco earthquake and all the other disasters since.

Late in his life, Cline said, "If we had known then what we know now, we would have known...of the storm which these swells told us in unerring language was coming."

If people had only known what was coming, they could have had plenty of time to bundle up their kids and walk to safety.

What this means for today

It's as God warned through the prophet Hosea, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6).

For the lack of knowledge, 8,000 people lost their lives in a dreadful calamity at Galveston on September 8, 1900. Jesus warned that many people will be oblivious to the impending crisis at the end of the age as well (Matthew 24:37-39). Surely, part of the gospel message that Jesus gave to His people to share is aimed at removing the ignorance as to the nature and final result of the great events prophesied to occur before His return.

The ocean swells that Isaac Cline was timing down by the beach foretold accurately an impending great storm. Cline didn't know what it meant. His wife and 8,000 people perished.

God's Word spells out conditions and events that herald the second coming of Jesus Christ. God has promised, "Surely the Lord God does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7).

One helpful resource that puts these prophecies together in a readable way is the booklet, *Are We Living in the Time of the End?* This 24-page, magazine-style booklet is available free of charge in the public interest. Just [click here](#) to request this information about the storms on our world's horizon, and the good news beyond.



A Personal Experience of Prayer

*It was a rare and magnificent sight,
and I prayed to be able to see it again.*

By **Kim McQueen**



IT WAS A DREARY, OVERCAST DAY. I had attempted to escape the city (Melbourne, Australia) by catching a train to the very end of the line, and then walking as far into the bush as I could. Consequently, I was rather disappointed when, after walking for quite a while, I found the track did not diverge from the road, but opened onto a picnic area packed with people. There were buses, kids, cars and senior citizens swarming all over the place. After several minutes spent desperately scanning the area, I was relieved to see a path nearby that looked delightfully deserted.

A few minutes later, away from cars and people, I began to enjoy the greenery and solitude. Then I heard a sound that stopped me dead in my tracks. I had never heard a lyrebird before, but I immediately recognized it. The call of the lyrebird is a distinctive medley of bird sounds combining the laugh of the kookaburra, the bell of the bellbird and the warble of the magpie, along with a number of other unidentifiable sounds.

Being a bird lover, the effect on me was what one might expect of a teenage boy if he were handed the keys of a Porsche for a test drive. The sound was quite close, and I sent up a quick prayer, "Please God, let me see it." I went three steps off the path and there it was, just behind some bushes, scratching at the ground. The experience lasted only seconds before it

disappeared. I badly wanted more. However, rather than attempting pursuit, I sat down, and, in light of my previous success, sent up another prayer, "Please, God, let me see that beautiful bird again..." Being the down-to-earth sort I added, "...within the next half-an-hour."

It made me realize that, not only does God give good things to us, but often what He has in mind is much better than our request.

For half an hour I sat praying (in a very one-track-minded way), thinking about faith and being eaten alive by insects. I didn't entirely expect my prayer to be answered--it seemed a rather ridiculous request, but I desperately wanted to see the lyrebird again, and I figured it was worth a try. After half an hour to the minute I stood up and muttered, "Thy will be done," and started to walk away.

Then I heard the lyrebird again. It sounded so close I felt compelled to follow its call, just in case God had changed His mind. Failing utterly to walk quietly along the gravel path, I followed the sound hopefully. And then, there it was in front of me. Unperturbed by my noisy intrusion, the lyrebird was singing on a log, just a few meters away. It

was such a magnificent sight it brought tears to my eyes. Eventually it left at an odd, wobbling run. But this time I was quite satisfied, and my prayer was one of thanks.

In that moment of elation as I watched the lyrebird disappear into the bushes for a second time, an interesting thought struck me: If God had brought the lyrebird back to where I had seen it in the first place, I would have had a very poor view of it among the dense bushes, and would not have been able to appreciate its full beauty.

The experience brought to mind Matthew 7:11, "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!" It made me realize that, not only does God give good things to us, but often what He has in mind is much better than our request.



If a Billionaire Was Coming to Your Town...

*What do we really want in life?
Are we looking for it in the right places?*

By Jeff Weatherhead



PEOPLE WORK HARD and spend large sums of money investing in businesses because of the possibility of one day being able to earn enough money to provide a good standard of living for themselves and their families. Some spend their hard earned money on lottery tickets in the mere hope that they might win the jackpot, so they can relax and enjoy all the wonderful things that money can buy.

But why do people want all that money anyway? Surely it's not so that they can have a lot of pieces of paper with the faces of deceased notables on them! No. We want the things that we think wealth will give us. In short, what we really want is to be happy! And to be happy for the rest of our lives.

So many of us spend so much time and energy worrying and fussing about the affairs of this physical life. We naturally get caught up in the here and now and lose sight of the big picture. Compared with eternity, our entire life-span on this earth is less than a breath in a hurricane.

Recently I asked my mother, "What will the things we worry about now really matter a hundred years from now, anyway?" She smiled and said, "What will they matter five years from now?" (She's 83.)

Although we all know we will die, yet many people today are quick to stop their ears from any discussion about the possibility of immortality. They consider it foolish and fanatical to

read the Bible, to talk about religion and worse yet, to pray.

Maybe I'm crazy, but somehow it seems reasonable to me to consider the subject. Since we know we will die, and it's really not likely that medical science will find a way to give us all immortality within the next hundred years, isn't it worth a reasonable amount of time to thoroughly check and prove to our own satisfaction, one way or the other, whether God exists? And to prove if the Bible is a divinely inspired manual about the way to live that would lead to immortal life?



Let me ask you something. If you heard that a billionaire was coming to your town soon, and that he was offering to everyone who qualified the sum of \$10 million, wouldn't you check thoroughly to find out if that was true, and exactly what was required to receive the \$10 million? Of course you would!

But today we've got our priorities twisted. If there is a possibility that you could lose out on an incredible opportunity such as being given the ability to live happily forever, wouldn't it make sense to check it out, thoroughly?

But here we are--we go to work, do a lot of this and that, maybe watch some television and generally waste our lives away. Then one gloomy day we find that our lives have gone by. And just what have we done? We've wasted our lives away, when we could have been finding out about and ensuring the way to immortality.

Well, I have good news for you. A multibillionaire IS coming! Jesus Christ said He would come again, and left details about the most incredible free gifts He is offering us. You can read more about this in a helpful booklet called, *The Road to Eternal Life*. [Click here](#) to request your copy. It's free. And the biblical truths presented are priceless!



Great Leaders Knew Their Source

*Where does great leadership come from,
and where has it gone?*

By Hector Earle



OH WHERE HAVE ALL OUR GREAT LEADERS GONE? Men and women who will stand up for what is right even if they have to stand alone. Leaders who will acutely understand that what is popular is not always right, and what is right is not always popular. Leaders who will once again shout from the senates and parliaments the virtues of God and His laws, and show us the moral compass to a rich and rewarding life. Heads of state who are not afraid to be "politically incorrect" and take a stand against the immoral cesspool and perilous times in which we live.

Where are the leaders who will echo the following sentiments of these great leaders from the past?

Patrick Henry: "It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great nation was founded not by religionists, but by Christians, not on religions but on the gospel of Jesus Christ! For this very reason the people of other faiths have been afforded asylum, prosperity and freedom of worship here."

Thomas Jefferson: "And can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are the gift of God? That they are not to be violated but with His wrath? Indeed, I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just; that His justice cannot sleep forever."

George Washington: "It is the duty of all nations to acknowledge



the providence of almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly to implore His protection, aid and favors."



Benjamin Franklin: "I have lived, sir, a long time, and the longer I live the more convincing proofs I see of this truth...that God governs the affairs of men. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid?"

James Madison: "We have staked the future upon the capacity of each and all of us to govern ourselves, to sustain ourselves, according to the Ten Commandments of God."

John Adams: "Our constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other."

William Penn: "We will either be governed by God or ruled by tyrants."

Andrew Jackson: "The Bible is true.... I have tried to conform to its spirit as near as possible. Upon that sacred volume I rest my hope for eternal salvation, through the merits and blood of our blessed Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ."

Abraham Lincoln: "...We have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us. It behooves us then, to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins, and to pray for clemency and forgiveness."

These are voices from the past that remind us that "righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people" (Proverbs 14:34, NIV). We need leaders like these who are great leaders because they follow and rely on God. We need leaders who know that our long-term protection and prosperity depend on our moral conduct. We need leaders who point us to the Creator for His blessings in this life and the gift of eternal life.



We Are But Man

*Whether wealthy elite or ragged vagabond,
without Christ in us we are but man.*

By Jack Elliott



WE CAME INTO THIS LIFE without choice of parents or circumstance. We pursue life, pleasure, happiness and abundance. Blessed, indeed, is he who finds them.

The rich take their riches for granted and are bored within their opulence. Though they seek excitement and gratification among the elite, life is not fulfilling. The poor, often proud of just being "humble folk," complain of their poverty and blame others for their plight. The vagabond trades on sympathy, but will not give up the freedom of the road. Happiness flees from us on the wings of disappointment and unrequited desire.

The vagabond receives joy over a hand-me-down warm coat and is grateful for the warmth that he is not used to. A morsel of bread brings as much gastric delight to him as caviar to the palate of the rich.

A warm blanket on a hard bed is a luxury appreciated more by the poor than the billows of a feather bed and a down comforter by the affluent.

Both go through life striving after the things which only temporarily satisfy.

We are but men and we go striving after wind. As wise old Solomon wrote, "I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and indeed, all is vanity and grasping for the wind" (Ecclesiastes 1:14).



If we are so blessed as to be called out of this world by the Father of Lights and added to the

Body of Christ, life takes on new meaning. Striving changes to pursuing the "pearl of great price."

Success does not come easily, even when helped by the Spirit, because the way to glory is fraught with wrong turns and stones of stumbling. Through trust in God the goal is made clear and the way manifest. Through His mercy, the burden becomes light.

As David wrote, "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me" (Psalm 23:1-4).

Those who hunger and thirst after the true righteousness of God and who forsake men's self-righteousness proceed toward the goal of life.

What is the goal of life? The Creator God has a plan to procreate a large loving family minded like Himself. God's sons and daughters cannot be of a contrary spirit.



He is not building chaotic, competing, fighting family members who would pollute His universal paradise. He is creating sons and daughters who love and respect one another and who simply adore their Father. They will be spiritual beings like God, whose thoughts are outgoing, filled with concern and consideration, giving and sharing. This is the love of God.

God's great example is to share His glory and joy and love with all those who will treasure it as He does. This life in the flesh is the training and testing ground for those who will persevere toward that end. This marvelous gift of eternal life is only available through His Son, Jesus Christ, who gave His life in our stead to cover the sins which thwart eternal life. His sacrifice covers our sins, which are contrary to His way of living, when we repent and set our hearts on the godly way. God's way of living is outlined in His laws and precepts through the Bible. They are made clear by the example of Jesus Christ's life on earth.

Happy are you, whether rich or poor, if God has set you on the road to life. No one falls through the cracks who truly wants to be like the Father and His Son Jesus Christ.

