IN THIS ISSUE

2 Thoughts to Ponder

3 Work: A Holy Calling
   by Jerram Barrs

4 Making Disciples Jesus’ Way: A Few at a Time
   by Greg Ogden

12 The Holiness of God
   by Art Lindsley

15 Blessed by God
   by William Angerman

28 Resources

(continued on page 8)

PROFILE IN FAITH

Justin Martyr (c.100–c.165)
by Amy Orr-Ewing
Training Director
RZIM Zacharias Trust

While it is true that every generation faces fresh challenges to their faith and witness, many find that other heroes have gone before us, and tackled similar challenges in powerful ways. Justin Martyr is one of these deeply engaged and thoughtful heroes.

He was born around 100 AD in the Greco-Roman colony of Flavia Neapolis, a city in what is now the northern West Bank area of the Holy Land. Thirsting for truth, he made the rounds of the various systems of philosophy available at the time. He first went to study Stoic philosophy, but found the agnosticism empty and described his teacher as a man who “knew nothing of God and did not even think knowledge of him to be necessary.” There followed a Peripatetic (itinerant philosopher), who seemed most interested in getting his fees; he then looked into Pythagorean philosophy but found that too great a knowledge of music, astronomy, and geometry were required before he could ask the bigger questions of truth. Finally he found himself persuaded of the potency of Platonism in the vibrant city of Ephesus, attracted by meditation upon truth and beauty, and the journey of perception of these lasting and immaterial realities in a fleeting world.

Justin believed that he was drawing near to a revelation of God when, on a solitary walk along a seashore, he met an old Christian man who engaged him in conversation. This Christian shook Justin’s confidence in Platonism’s wisdom and challenged him to look at the writings of the Hebrew prophets—much older than the philosophies he had been reading and superior, since they were not reasoners but witnesses. The prophets had foretold the coming of Christ, and these prophecies had

[Justin] wrote: “I fell in love with the prophets and these men who had loved Christ; I reflected on all their words and found that this philosophy alone was true and profitable.”
Thoughts to Ponder

Of Resisting Temptation

by Thomas à Kempis

Thomas à Kempis (1380-1471) was an Augustinian monk and member of the Brethren of the Common Life, part of a reform movement called the Devotio Moderna. He wrote out of a profound knowledge of Scripture (having copied the entire Bible four times), and a deep relationship with Christ. He opposed speculative theology and encouraged believers to a life of holiness, humility, and intimacy with Christ. He has been described as a reformer before the Reformation, and his works have had a powerful impact on both Catholics and Protestants for over 500 years. The following excerpt is from The Imitation of Christ, the most widely read book, next to the Bible, in the history of the church.

So long as we live in this world we can not be without tribulation and temptation.

According as it is written in Job, “The life of man upon earth is a life of temptation.”

Everyone therefore ought to be careful about his temptations, and to watch in prayer, lest the devil find an occasion to deceive him; who never sleepeth, but goeth about seeking whom he may devour.

No man is so perfect and holy, but he hath sometimes temptations; and altogether without them we can not be. Nevertheless, temptations are often very profitable to us, though they be troublesome and grievous; for in them a man is humbled, purified, and instructed.

All saints passed through many tribulations and temptations, and profited thereby.

And they that could not bear temptations, became reprobate, and fell away.

There is no order so holy, nor place so secret, where there be not temptations, or adversities.

There is no man that is altogether free from temptations while he liveth on earth: for in ourselves is the root thereof, being born with an inclination to evil.

When one temptation or tribulation goeth away, another cometh; and we shall ever have something to suffer, because we are fallen from the state of our happiness.

Many seek to flee temptations, and fall more grievously into them.

(continued on page 27)
Work: A Holy Calling

by Jerram Barrs

Professor of Christian Studies and Contemporary Culture and
Resident Scholar of the Francis Schaeffer Institute, Covenant Theological Seminary

Whatever job you do, it is a holy calling, a sacred calling, a responsibility given to you by God to serve Him there. Too often we think of our work, if we are not working specifically for the church, as being secular, second-class, having nothing to do with true spirituality, and little to do with being a faithful Christian. You can think of all the incorrect expressions we use to mark this division between the sacred and the secular: We speak of people who are in “full-time ministry” as if only they are “full-time Christians.”

We have a heritage in many churches which devalues ordinary work and sees it having little importance in the Kingdom of God. Why is that? Partly because there has been a retreat by Christians from the general culture: “The world is so worldly,” we say, “so what really matters to God is what we do in the church.” We can tend to fill up our lives with lots of meetings so we will feel more spiritual, as if it is those meetings that are spiritual. This is a very serious misunderstanding of what Scripture teaches.

Perhaps another reason for our low opinion of our work is that we think that only evangelism, only preaching the Gospel, only teaching the Word is of real importance in the Kingdom of God—everything else is secondary. And I am sure you have heard sermons and Bible studies in which you have basically been made to feel that if you were really dedicated to God, you would immediately apply to a mission board or register at a seminary and start training for the ministry. But that simply is not biblical. God does not call all people to proclaim His Word; I am one of those He has called to do that. But he has equally called people to be in other work and to honor Him, whatever their occupation.

The Value of Work

What is it that gives our work value to God? Is it simply that when we work we earn money so that we can give a tithe to support the ministry of the Word? Is that alone what gives our work value? No. It is true that we are called to support the ministry of the Word; Scripture says so quite clearly. But that is not what ultimately gives our work value.

Is it that in our work-places we have the opportunity to be sort of mini-missionaries, to share the Gospel with the people we work alongside? Is that what gives our work value? NO. While we do pray that God will give opportunities to share His truth because people need to hear it, that is not what primarily gives our work our value.

Work: A Holy Calling

Is it simply that we have to work to earn money to support ourselves so (continued on page 19)
The crisis at the heart of the church is a crisis of product,” writes Bill Hull. Is there any more important question for a pastor to answer than “what kind of people are we growing in our ministries”? According to pollsters such as George Barna and George Gallup, we are not producing people who are a whole lot different in conviction and lifestyle from the rest of society. This has been well documented, so I will not bore you with a recitation of the bad news. I will get right to what I consider the solution.

Jesus made it crystal clear that there is a singular product that He equates with the mission of the church—“Go and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19). Every church’s mission is the same. There is only one mission: making disciples of Jesus. We may prefer to express it in a fresh, contemporary way, such as “to turn irreligious people into fully devoted followers of Christ,” but it will still just be a restatement of the Great Commission.

When I have had opportunities to speak to pastors on the subject of disciple-making, I have taken an informal poll: “Raise your hand if you have a few people in your weekly schedule with whom you meet for the purpose of helping them to become reproducing disciples of Jesus.” Sadly, I get minimal response. It would seem to be a natural expectation, since Jesus modeled for us the way to grow disciples. He called twelve “to be with him” in order to shape their characters and transfer his mission to them. I believe we have a crisis of product in large part because pastors are not following the model that Jesus gave us. And we are missing out on a most joyful and fruitful opportunity.

In this article I will describe an embarrassingly simple, yet reproducible way to grow disciples of Jesus who will leave your practice of ministry forever changed and your church populated with self-initiating, reproducing disciples of Christ.

The Model for Multiplication
I call it my major “aha moment” in ministry. It has shaped my approach to growing disciples more than anything else. Frankly, it was a discovery breakthrough that I stumbled on.

Disciples are made in small, reproducible groups of three or four (triads or quads) that cultivate an environment of transformation and multiplication.
I had been frustrated that I was not seeing a multiplication of disciples. The one-on-one model was the paradigm that I had assumed was the way to make reproducing disciples. After all, wasn't the Paul-Timothy relationship the biblical pattern? Discipling meant to give myself to one other person for the purpose of seeing the life of Christ built in them, which would then lead them to do the same for another and so on. The only trouble was, I wasn't seeing them doing the same for another. In other words, there was no multiplication.

What was I doing wrong? We have all heard that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again, while expecting different results. Frustrated, I would redouble my efforts: make sure I had good content; ratchet up my prayer life; teach skills such as Bible study and witness; and yet I was not able to instill confidence, pass on the vision, nor empower the other person to disciple others. All my refinements only led to the same results.

Then the breakthrough came. I had written a disciple-making curriculum that became the basis for my final project for a Doctor of Ministry degree. My faculty mentor thought it would be a worthy experiment to test the dynamics of this material in a variety of settings. So in addition to the one-on-one, I invited two others to join me on this journey.

There was no way I could have anticipated the potency to be unleashed. Just by adding a third person, it was as if the Holy Spirit was present to us in a way that was life-giving and transforming and laid the foundation for multiplication.

I have never gone back to the one-on-one model for making disciples because of what I experienced. Now, twenty years later, I have had considerable opportunity to reflect on the difference in dynamics between triads and quads, and the one-on-one approach.

What are the limitations of the one-on-one model?

1. In the one-on-one model, the discipler carries the full weight of responsibility for the spiritual welfare of another. The discipler is like the mother bird that goes out to scavenge for worms to feed to her babies. With their mouths wide open, the babes wait in their nest for the mother bird to return. The discipler is cast in the role of passing on their vast knowledge to the one with limited knowledge.

2. The one-on-one relationship sets up a hierarchy that tends to result in dependency. The one-on-one creates a father-son, teacher-student, mature-immature relationship. As appreciative as the Timothy might be, the one in the receiving position is more often than not unable to see themselves in the giving position. The gulf between the Paul and the Timothy is only accentuated when the relationship is between pastor and parishioner. The pastor is the trained professional who has superior biblical knowledge that the non-professional, ordinary lay person will never see themselves achieving.

3. The one-on-one limits the interchange or dialogue. I liken the one-on-one discourse to a ping-pong match. It is back and forth, with the discipler under continuous pressure to advance the ball. The discipler must continue

(continued on page 6)
[continued from page 5]

to press the interchange on to a higher plane.

4. The one-on-one also creates a one-model approach. The primary influence on a new disciple becomes a single person. The parameters of the discipling experience are defined by the strengths and weaknesses of one individual.

5. Finally, the one-on-one model does not generally reproduce. If it does, it is rare. Only self-confident, inwardly motivated persons can break the dependency and become self-initiating and reproducing.

In my opinion we have inadvertently held up a hierarchical, positional model of discipling that is non-transferable. As long as there is the sense that one person is over another by virtue of superior spiritual authority, however that is measured, very few people are going to see themselves as qualified to disciple others. We may tout this as a multiplication method, but in actuality it contains the seeds of its own destruction.

As a result of my experience, I commend a non-hierarchical model that views discipling as a mutual process of peer mentoring. In order to avoid the dependency trap, the relationship needs to be seen as side-by-side, rather than one having authority or position over another.

An Alternative Practical Model of Disciple-Making (Triads/Quads)

Here is my best take on why triads/quads are energizing, joy-filled, and reproductive:

1. There is a shift from unnatural pressure to the natural participation of the discipler. When a third or fourth person is added, the discipler is no longer the focal point, but a part of a group process. The discipler in this setting is a fellow participant. Though the discipler is the convener of the triad/quad, they quickly become one of the group on the journey together toward maturity in Christ.

2. There is a shift from hierarchy to peer relationship. The triad/quad naturally creates more of a come-alongside mutual journey. The focus is not so much upon the discipler as it is upon Christ as the one toward whom all are pointing their lives. Even as a pastor, I found that though the relationship may have started with a consciousness that I was the “Bible answer-man” because of my title and training, within the first few weeks the triad/quad allowed me to be another disciple with fellow disciples who are attempting together to follow Jesus.

3. There is a shift from dialogue to dynamic interchange. In my initial experiment with triads, I often came away from those times saying to myself, “What made that interchange so alive and dynamic?” The presence of the Holy Spirit seemed palpable. Life and energy marked the exchange. As I have come to understand group dynamics, one-on-one is not a group. It is only as you add a third that you have the first makings of a group. (Think trinity.)

4. There is shift from limited input to wisdom in numbers. The book of Proverbs speaks of the wisdom that comes from many counselors (Proverbs 15:22). It is often those who are perceived as younger or less mature in the faith from whom great wisdom comes, or a fresh spark of life, or just great questions. In a current quad, one of the men at our initial gathering announced, “I have never opened the Bible.” I had observed an eagerness and hunger in Mick, so I was sure that I had misunderstood his
“If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were just those who thought most of the next. …It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this. Aim at Heaven and you will get earth ‘thrown in’: aim at earth and you will get neither.”

C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*  

...comment. So I responded, “You mean you have never studied the Bible seriously.” “No, I have never opened a Bible.” Since that first session, Mick has demonstrated a voracious appetite for Scripture. Yet what have been particularly challenging are his perceptive questions, which have led to engaging dialogue and deeper exploration.

5. There is a shift from **addition to multiplication**. For me there is no greater joy than to see a Christian reproduce. All of the above adds up to empowerment. For more than two decades, I have observed an approximately 75 percent reproduction rate through the triad/quad model of disciple-making.

In summary, a smaller unit encourages multiplication because it minimizes the hierarchical dimensions and maximizes a peer-mentoring model. A discipleship curriculum specifically designed for this intimate relationship creates a simple, reproducible structure that almost any growing believer can lead. Leadership in these groups can be rotated early on, since the size makes for an informal interchange and the curriculum provides a guide to follow.

(continued on page 21)
been fulfilled. The old man left and Justin never saw him again, but this profound conversation changed the course of his life. He followed the man’s advice and read the Old Testament and then the Gospels, and in the process, the enthusiastic Platonist became a Christian. He wrote: “I fell in love with the prophets and these men who had loved Christ; I reflected on all their words and found that this philosophy alone was true and profitable.”

After his conversion, Justin met other Christians who discipled him. As a result, he devoted himself to the spreading of the gospel. He was never ordained in any official role, but became a powerful evangelist and voice for Christ in his generation. He wrote: “Everyone who can preach the truth and does not preach it, incurs the judgement of God.”

Justin was an evangelist who used philosophy and arguments as he went. He engaged with the ideas and attacks of a hostile culture, trying to convince Romans, Greeks, and Jews to turn to Christ. He lived in times when profession of Christ was a crime under a Roman law designed to curb secret societies and prohibited religions. Despite this, after a few years he moved to Rome, where he founded a Christian school. Here he met vehement opposition from the Cynic philosopher Crescens, whose antagonism to the gospel made Justin determined to compose an “Apology” or reasoned defense of the Christian faith. This Apology was issued in 150 AD in the form of a petition addressed to the Emperor Antoninus Pius. Sometime afterward Justin published his Dialogue with Trypho the Jew. A shorter Second Apology was addressed to the Roman Senate, apparently after the accession of Marcus Aurelius (161 AD).

A few years later, Justin was denounced to the Roman prefect as subversive and condemned to death along with six other Christians—he was beaten and beheaded. The prefect at his trial asked him to denounce his faith by making a sacrifice to the gods. Justin replied, “No one who is rightly minded turns from true belief to false.”

Why is Justin Martyr important to us?
As one of the earliest Christian apologists, Justin is relevant to us because his context has huge resonance with the issues we face today in the decadent, pluralist West. He was facing a Greco-Roman culture convinced of pluralism but specifically antagonistic towards Christianity. He also had to contend with the huge difference between Christian morality and the morality of this pagan culture—an issue which he dealt with frequently. In this culture, sexual relationships in particular were relatively promiscuous and both homosexual and heterosexual relationships were completely acceptable and encouraged. Preaching the Christian gospel presented hearers with an inevitable moral challenge then, as it does today.

Justin was preaching Christ and Christ alone in the ancient world where multiple philosophies and religions were competing for the attention of the public. Although a pluralistic state, some religions were frowned upon and explicitly outlawed, and Christianity was one of these. Christians’ refusal to worship the many gods of the age or to worship the emperor was perceived to be a threat to national security—like refusing a pledge of allegiance or an oath of loyalty to a king. As a result, Christians were under heavy pressure to acquiesce and make Christ just a part of the pantheon of gods on offer, rather than insisting on Him being the only true God. In his first Apology, Justin tried to demonstrate to those in authority that Christianity was not a threat to the state and should be treated as a legal religion. He wrote “on behalf of men of every nation who are unjustly hated and reviled.”

Justin argued that Christians are, in fact, the emperor’s “best helpers and allies in securing good order, convinced as we are that no wicked man... can be hidden from God, and that everyone goes to eternal punishment or
Justin was preaching Christ and Christ alone in the ancient world where multiple philosophies and religions were competing for the attention of the public.

Justin’s Method
Justin was a brilliant apologist and one from whom we can learn so much today. He used a varied methodology, not relying on one tried and tested way, but using all kinds of approaches in order to persuade and convince people that the Christian message was true and relevant to them.

Polemic: Justin was not afraid to call darkness dark and brightness light. He talked, for example, about the demonic very frankly with those who opposed the gospel. He saw there was a crucial place for polemics in evangelism with the more feisty of his opponents. Some of the best evangelists amongst Muslims today are not averse to engaging in polemical as well as persuasive debate.

Storytelling: Justin famously told a story to the emperor that was intended to show that Christians are good citizens. At the end of the first Apology, Justin told how, during a difficult battle, Christian soldiers fighting in the Roman army didn’t want to fight on in an impossible situation, and so instead called an impromptu prayer meeting. The heavens opened and it poured with rain, stopping the battle and saving many Roman lives. Justin told this story to assert that Christians are good citizens and to undermine the common misconception that Christians were enemies of the state, with their opting out of religious festivals and all their talk of a “kingdom.” Justin responded that Christians weren’t looking for an earthly kingdom that would threaten Rome. If they were, they wouldn’t go to their deaths so calmly, but would run away and hide until the kingdom came on earth. Furthermore, he insisted that “we, more than all other men, are truly your helpers and allies in fostering peace,” because Christians knew they would face God one day and give an account of their lives. “Only God do we worship,” he said, “but in other things we joyfully obey you, acknowledging you as the kings and rulers of men.” It is crucial today that we too use storytelling in the task of calling hearts and minds to follow Christ. Jesus always used parables, and a Christian faith in the public realm will remain high and dry philosophy without illustrations.

Persuasion: Justin used powerful, emotively persuasive arguments to convince people of the truth of the gospel. He cited Christian bravery in the face of brutal martyrdom as an argument for the truthfulness and sincerity of their beliefs. “For though we are beheaded, and crucified, exposed to beasts and chains and fire and all other forms of torture it is plain that we do not forsake the confession of our faith, but the more things of this kind happen to us so much the more are there many others who become believers and truly religious through the name of Jesus.” We need to do the same today—find powerful arguments that people find persuasive and use them in a relevant way.

Clearing up misunderstandings: There was a lot of rumor and misunderstanding in the pagan world about what Christians believed and did. It was commonly believed that they were cannibals who ate a body at sexually perverse love feasts. Justin therefore gave a description that remains one of the most accurate historical accounts of early Christian worship. “On the day called Sunday there is a gathering together in the same place of all who live in a given city or rural district. The memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits. Then when the reader ceases, the president in a discourse admonishes and urges the imitation of these good things. Next we all rise together and send up prayers. When we cease from our prayer, bread is presented and wine and water. The president in the same manner sends up prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people sing out their assent, saying the ‘Amen.’

(continued on page 10)
Profile in Faith: Justin Martyr

(continued from page 9)

A distribution and participation of the elements for which thanks have been given is made to each person, and to those who are not present they are sent by the deacons.”

We need to do similar clear-up jobs today, dispelling the rumor that Christianity is legalistic or sexist or against women’s rights with calm, clear-headed information and description.

Dialogue: Justin exploited the apologetic potential of the idea of the Logos, which was current in both Stoicism and Platonism. In dialoguing with adherents of these philosophies, he connected their views on the Logos with the Christian gospel. He argued that the same Logos is known by Christian and pagan believers, but that it is the Christians who have a full and complete revelation of this in Christ. He argued that pre-Christian philosophers like Heraclitus and Socrates had partial access to the truth, and that their followers should come to Christ for the fullness of what they glimpsed. Justin argued that Christianity builds upon and fulfills the hints and anticipations of God’s revelation that are found in pagan philosophy: “Our religion is clearly more sublime than any human teaching in this respect: the Christ who has appeared for us human beings represents the Logos principle in its fullness.” We need to do the same today—make points of connection with the current culture and use them in dialogue. An example would be the widespread interest in spirituality today. This gives believers a wide-open door to share that there is a real, personal God who wants relationship with us, and who fills his forgiven people with the Holy Spirit.

He used their philosophy against them: Because Christians wouldn’t worship the Greek and Roman gods, they were called atheists and fiercely persecuted. Justin commented, “Though we declare that we do no wickedness and that we do not hold atheistic opinions, you do not examine the charges made against us; but impelled by unreasoning passion and by the instigation of evil demons, you punish us without examination.” Christians were being killed because of their dangerous and irrational belief in atheism! Justin used the Romans’ faulty reasoning against them in his writing. He asked how Christians could be atheists since they worshipped “the Most True God.” Christians worship the Father, Son, and Prophetic Spirit, he said, and “pay homage to them in reason and truth.” Justin also pointed out the inconsistency of Roman rulers. Some of their own philosophers taught that there were no gods, yet they weren’t persecuted just for bearing the name philosopher. Even worse, some poets denounced Jupiter, but were honored by governmental leaders. We can learn from this approach by pointing out where atheistic worldviews fail their own tests for truth, or where a belief in moral absolutes belies tacit belief in a moral law giver.

Personal testimony: Justin told his own conversion story as a means of convincing others. He wrote: “My spirit was immediately set on fire, and an affection for the prophets, and for those who are friends of Christ, took hold of me; while pondering on his words, I discovered that his was the only sure and useful philosophy…it is my wish that everyone would be of the same sentiments as I, and never spurn the Saviour’s words.” We need to do this today—share our personal testimonies about what Jesus has done in our lives.

Worldview and disagreement—finding points of dissonance: Christians in the early church were charged with engaging in gross immorality. As mentioned above, they were said to engage in orgies and in cannibalism in their worship services. In his apologies, Justin defended Christians as being instead people of high moral character. Justin said Christians demonstrated their honesty by not lying when brought to trial. Because they were people of truth, they would confess their faith even unto death. They loved truth more than life itself. Christians were patient in times of persecution, and showed love even to their enemies. Justin said, “We who loved above all else the
ways of acquiring riches and possessions now hand over to a community fund what we possess, and share it with every needy person; we who hated and killed one another and would not share our hearth with those of another tribe because of their [different] customs, now, after the coming of Christ, live together with them, and pray for our enemies, and try to convince those who hate us unjustly...” The great irony here is that Christians were accused of immorality when actually the opposite was the case, and Justin pointed out this anomaly. He powerfully contrasted what the Christians were falsely charged with doing, and punished for, with what the Romans did with impunity. For example, Christians were charged with killing babies in worship services and then consuming them. Justin countered that it was the worshipers of Saturn who engaged in homicide and in drinking blood, and other pagans who sprinkled the blood of men and animals on their idols.

Living it out: True Christianity should be seen in action. Words and apologetic arguments are not enough—the actions and lifestyle of the believer have a potential even today to present a huge challenge to others. Justin said that many were “turned from a life of violence and tyranny, because they were conquered either by the constancy of their neighbors’ lives, or by the strange patience they noticed in their injured associates, or by experiencing their honesty in business matters.” One writer notes that these examples of changed lives later came to be known as “the triumphal song of the Apologists.”

An Inspiring Teacher and Example
Justin had to face charges of atheism, immorality, illegality, and irrationality. He countered all of these with powerful apologetic responses, not allowing people to go on rejecting the gospel for faulty reasons. What a challenge for us to present the claims of the One True God in the face of pluralism, to stand lovingly firm in contemporary clashes of morality and ethics, to rebut charges of irrationality and stupidity in response to the New Atheists.

Today, bearing the name evangelical or being associated with a well-known Christian like Jerry Falwell or Pat Robertson is enough to be convicted of being mean-spirited, bigoted, closed-minded, and certainly harmful to society. If we Christians would just keep our religion private while in public, agreeing with the sentiments of secular society, we would be acceptable. To this we must respond as Justin did, not by getting angry or discouraged but by setting forth what we really believe and by showing that we—and Christianity itself—really aren’t harmful to a well-ordered society, but in fact are good for it. We might want to go further, as Justin did, and show how the morality of our day is actually harmful to society.

Justin the apologist and martyr is an inspiring example to us today of how to contend for the faith in an increasingly hostile world. We have a lot to learn from his thoughtful, bold, compelling, fearless approach. Living less than 100 years after Christ, he gives us a fantastic insight into the methodology and challenges of the early church as they proclaimed the gospel. He used polemic, persuasion, storytelling, clearing up misunderstanding, dialogue, using their philosophy against them, personal testimony, worldview challenges, and a practical, vibrant, lived-out Christian faith in his approach. He was not just a great articulator of the message—he paid the ultimate price, dying a martyr’s death.

So we are left with the question: Are we prepared to make a stand for Christ in our own situations—workplace, university, family, or community? Are we effective in making the gospel clear to people? Are we prepared to suffer for Christ? Justin was.

His last words were: “We desire nothing more than to suffer for our Lord Jesus Christ; for this gives us salvation and joyful-ness before his dreadful judgement seat, at which all the world must appear.”

True Christianity should be seen in action. Words and apologetic arguments are not enough – the actions and lifestyle of the believer have a potential even today to present a huge challenge to others.
One of the most important attributes for understanding God and ourselves is God’s holiness. When we catch a vision of God’s holiness, we can regard many things in our lives as holy. When we lose a sense of God’s holiness (as many have), then we lose the realization that anything is holy or unholy. In this latter case, we also lose a sense of our own sinfulness, our need for God’s grace, and the desperate plight of our culture.

The Hebrew word for holy is quadosh, and the Greek word is haigos. In both cases, the meaning is separateness or being set apart from that which is unclean. An encounter with God always produces awe and dread that leads to separation from sin.

In Isaiah 6:1-8, we see Isaiah’s vision of God in the temple. He sees the Lord “sitting on a throne lofty and exalted” (vs. 1). Seraphim surround Him calling to each other, “Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory” (vs. 3). This triple repetition of a divine attribute is without parallel in the rest of the Bible. Scripture never says that God is “justice, justice, justice” or even “love, love, love,” but it does say that He is “holy, holy, holy.” The Hebrew does not have a grammatical way to express the comparative or the superlative (i.e., holier or holiest). The way it stresses the importance of something is by repetition. For instance, Genesis 14 describes a battle between various kings. At one point the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah flee and fall into the “tar pits” (vs. 10). In order to indicate the size and extent of these “tar pits,” the Hebrew just repeats the word “pit.” These “tar pits” are the “pit, pits.” In other words, these are the pitiest pits you could find anywhere.

Similarly, when God is described as “holy, holy, holy,” it underlines his utter purity. He is set apart, One who inspires awe and is worthy of worship. The foundations of the temple start to tremble (vs. 4) and so does Isaiah himself. He cries out, “Woe is me, I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips and I live among a people of unclean lips” (vs. 5). This is the only time in Scripture that a prophet pronounces the prophetic judgment “woe” on himself. As Isaiah encounters God’s holiness, he is acutely aware of his sin and the sinfulness of the society around him. Any vision of God’s holiness leads to a sense of our own sin and makes us sensitive to the unholliness of the culture around us.

Isaiah is also particularly aware of the deficiency in his speech and the way of speaking around him. The central passage in Romans 3 that describes the pervasiveness of our sin also emphasizes the “lips.” “There is none righteous, not even one…none who seeks for God…none who does good, not even one” (Rom. 3:10-12). It goes on to speak of the throat as an “open grave” (vs. 13), “tongues…deceiving” (vs. 13), lips have the “poison of asps” (vs. 13). The mouth contains “cursing and bitterness” (vs. 14). This emphasis ought to lead us to examine what comes out of our mouths, and to reflect on the unholy ways our culture influences our speech.

However, if Isaiah was simply left with this crushing sense of sin, he would be unfit
for the ministry he was called to pursue. So God sends a seraphim with a burning coal from the altar to touch Isaiah's lips (vs. 6). In this way, Isaiah is told that “your iniquity is taken away, and your sin is forgiven” (vs. 7). Then (and only then) the Lord asks, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” (vs. 8). Isaiah responds, “Here am I, send me!” (vs. 8). When Isaiah responds to God’s call, he is under no illusion about the degree of his sinfulness. He is utterly dependent on God’s grace. In a similar way, when we each see our own sin, that does not make us unsuitable for ministry, but a candidate desperately desiring God’s grace. In fact, if we feel worthy of the ministry to which we have been called, we should beware.

**Why Should We Be Holy?**

**Our motive for being holy is not primarily to follow rules and laws, but to follow God Himself.** We are to strive to be holy, “pursuing... the holiness without which no one can see the Lord” (Heb. 12:14). But how can we be motivated to be holy? Why should we be holy? The answer to this question gives us a profound insight into what our motives should be.

*We are to be holy because God is holy.* I Peter 1:14-16: “As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance. But like the Holy One who called you, be holy in all your behavior; Because it is written, ‘you shall be holy, for I am holy.’ ” The reason we are to be holy is because God is holy. We are to obey (vs. 14) not just because the Bible tells us to do so, but because of who God is—the nature of His character.

This also means that God’s commands are not arbitrary. In secular philosophy classes, the professor might raise a dilemma to put Christians on the spot: “Does God command something because it is good or is it good because God commands it?” Either side of the dilemma seems unacceptable. In the first case, God commands something because it is good—it seems that there is something higher than God; namely, “the good.” In the latter case—something is good because God commands it—smacks of arbitrariness in God. (God could have been evil and evil, good.)

What is the answer to the dilemma? It is that God is a law unto Himself. In other words, God’s commands are really a reflection of His nature. He commands the good because He is good, holiness because he is holy, justice because he is just, love because he is loving and so on. God’s commands also correspond to our own nature, being made in the image of God. God’s commands are not unduly restrictive, but show us how to be free and whole. They are like God’s “instruction manual” or God’s “prescription” for how we are to run the human “machine.” For instance, if you put water in the gas tank of your car, it not only violates the instruction manual for the type of fuel to be used, but it will make the car run erratically or even shut down.

(continued on page 14)
As our culture loses a sense of God’s holiness, we lose a sense that anything is holy. When we lose a vision of the beauty of His holiness, then there is an ugliness that creeps from the inside out, touching our relationships, churches, workplaces, buildings, and ways of life.

The Loss of the Holy
As our culture loses a sense of God’s holiness, we lose a sense that anything is holy. When we lose a vision of the beauty of His holiness, then there is an ugliness that creeps from the inside out, touching our relationships, churches, workplaces, buildings, and ways of life. In the Old Testament there were holy places and holy spaces. The ground around the burning bush was holy (Ex. 3:5). The temple was holy (Isa. 64:11; Jon. 2:4; Hab. 2:20). There are holy utensils (I Chron. 9:29), garments (Ex. 29:21; Lev. 16:4), foods (I Sam. 21:4; Neh. 7:65), oil (Ex. 30:25, 31; Num. 35:13; Ezek. 42:13). The holiness of God sets apart concrete things as holy. Though we are not bound by the ceremonial law (fulfilled in Christ), we are to now set apart all aspects of our lives as holy unto the Lord. There is for us a holy meal (the Lord’s supper), holy baptism, holy hands (I Tim. 2:8), and a holy calling (II Tim. 1:9). We are now to be holy in body and spirit (I Cor. 7:34) and to offer our bodies as a holy sacrifice (Rom. 12:1). We are to be ones described in Scripture as “saints” (literally “holy ones”) (I Cor. 1:2). And as the body of Christ, we are to be a holy nation (I Peter 2:9) in the world. In other words, every aspect of our lives is to be dedicated as holy unto the Lord. There is a passage in Zechariah 14:20-21 that prophesies this extension of the holy from particular objects to all of life. These final two verses of Zechariah say, “In that day there will be inscribed on the bells of the horses ‘HOLY TO THE LORD’ and the cooking pots in the Lord’s house will be like the bowls before the altar. And every cooking pot in Jerusalem and in Judah will be holy to the Lord of hosts…” The “bowls before the altar” (vs. 20) might be considered holy utensils because of their proximity to the holy altar. But there will come a time in the future, Zechariah prophesies, where every cooking pot in the Lord’s house will be holy (not just those by the altar). In fact, in that day every cooking pot in Jerusalem and Judah will be holy (not just those in the Lord’s house). This holiness will be so pervasive that even the smallest object such as bells on a horse’s neck will be inscribed as “HOLY TO THE LORD.” To truly regard every good created thing as holy requires a renewed vision of the beauty of God’s holiness. Without this perspective, one area after the other will be stripped of the words, “Holy to the Lord.”

Today, as never before, we need holy marriages, holy families, holy houses, holy hospitality, holy friends, holy vocations, etc. But these can only come as we gain a vision of God and his holiness that captivates us and transforms our vision from the inside out to all areas of life. Let us then devote ourselves fully to seeking to know God’s holiness and to becoming individually and corporately what we were created to be—holy people worshiping a Holy God.
My spiritual walk, beginning with childhood, is summed up by the beautifully perceptive prayer of St. Augustine on the human condition:

You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you.

This restlessness has always been present in me, and therefore I do not have a specific conversion story or a turning-point moment that brought me to my knees. What I have experienced is a slow, year-by-year growth in my yearning and a year-by-year blessing of the Holy Spirit in finding the rest St. Augustine identifies.

In Gordon T. Smith’s book, *Beginning Well*, he talks about second-generation Christians. Smith says, “The children of believers are, in the language of Paul, ‘holy’ or ‘sanctified’ (1 Cor. 7:14). But though these children have a special identity before God, every Christian tradition affirms the need for a conscious adult appropriation of the faith of their parents.”

My mother was the family spiritual leader. She led my sisters and me in daily devotional studies, read the Bible to us, and led us in daily prayer. My father was much quieter in his religion, but lived his faith as salt and light. I remember a time when I was about eight or nine, sitting on the couch by myself after church, when I experienced what Wesley described as a warming of the heart. C.S. Lewis writes about this experience as joy. It was brief, but distinct, and has always been a touchstone for me in seeking God’s presence and peace in my life. It was a feeling of awareness and a sense of belonging, but not yet a faith commitment or repentance. It was for me a high point along the continuum of the work of the Holy Spirit in my life and a beginning of my restlessness for understanding and a willingness to surrender to God’s love.

My father was a U.S. Army officer who spent 23 years in the service. I grew up in Germany, Maryland, Okinawa, and Missouri. From the age of seven to ten years old, I lived in Okinawa, and I have some vivid memories of typhoons and unexploded ammunition from World War II in our grade school playground. But mostly I remember playing baseball and realizing that other people in the world were very different from Americans, often very poor and desperate as their homes were destroyed by typhoons and they were forced to live in caves.

I was close to these events because my family became very good friends with a missionary family that lived in a thatched Okinawan house in the village. The Ketchums were Canadians who had a young son and daughter. Two items about Mr. Ketchum were of great interest to me. First, he played the trumpet in church and in his mission worship services, and he gave me my early trumpet lessons. Second, he had a sailing ministry. Sailing in the Ryukyuan Islands was dangerous, and on two occasions he lost his boat in a typhoon with the loss of three crewmen. The Ketchums witnessed to me by their living

(continued on page 16)
and preaching the Gospel. Their example had a very lasting effect on me because of the clear and substantial sacrifice they made as missionaries. God placed these experiences and thoughts in my heart, and I still reflect on them to this day.

As I grew and moved on in my search, I met Debbie, my wife of thirty-eight years, during our senior year in college. We both had come from Christian homes and Presbyterian churches. But we really did not explore our Christian beliefs as much as we just shared common values while in college. After graduation, I was commissioned in the Army, and we went to Germany for three years and had our first baby. It was after we returned to El Paso and joined the First Presbyterian Church there that we both began to explore our faith and beliefs. When you have your first child, you almost always get serious about what is really important and begin to ask the why and how questions of life. Debbie and I have done this together, and in so doing made our Christian faith the cornerstone of raising our family and growing together.

After six years in the field with armored cavalry units, the Army sent me to Indiana University to get a Masters degree in English literature in preparation to teach at West Point. This was my immersion into the world of ideas, and I loved it. Thus began my real thirst for knowledge and education. At West Point I was given the opportunity to have a philosophy tutorial for two summers under a well-known, respected professor from New York University. It was during this time that I began my intellectual quest for God. First, did God exist? What are His attributes, and is He the loving relational God of Christians? What about Christ as Lord and Savior? It was then that I found C.S. Lewis in the library by pure accident (providence?). I read all Lewis’ non-fiction, Mere Christianity, God in the Dock, Miracles, The Problem of Pain, The Four Loves, The Screwtape Letters, and my favorite, The Great Divorce. Here I found the answer that the philosophies that I had been studying could not provide—a systematic, liveable worldview. Also during this time at West Point, Debbie and I attended a Bible study and met with some wonderful Christian witnesses who encouraged us. This was our first experience of a small faith group outside the formal church setting, and we both realized the importance of small groups. Actually the Army is filled with faithful and loving Christians and is a wonderful place to grow in faith.

In the Army it is not allowed to overtly preach your faith. However, it is permissible to have a Bible on your desk. As an officer, you are in a position of authority, but unlike the Roman centurion, you cannot influence your soldiers directly in their religious beliefs. However, as a junior officer, leading dozens of soldiers, and as a senior officer, leading hundreds of soldiers, you can very easily witness your faith by your actions and relationships. When I was a commander, my soldiers clearly knew I was a Christian by my personal practice of faith and attending and participating in the chapel activities of the unit. As a squadron commander, I had a chaplain assigned to me and was able to mentor him and support his Christian activities in the unit such
I have found the “rest” of which Augustine speaks, but at the same time I am moved to seek God more than ever before. I wish to use my blessings and the fruits of the Spirit in whatever way God leads me. I have put my teaching and administrative abilities to use at my church by serving on a spiritual formation committee and by developing and teaching Bible study classes. Because of the C.S. Lewis Fellows program, I have become an advocate for a more evangelical perspective, and have provided meaningful resources from the Fellows program to my church leadership and fellow Christians in my classes and covenant groups.

Personally, as I look toward retirement, it has become clear to me that spiritual growth and serving is where I want to spend my time. Debbie and I agree in our vision for our retirement years that we want to be active in the church and be intentional about serving. We have not yet figured out exactly how God will lead us to accomplish this.

I live in complete assurance of my salvation. The promise of the new covenant is that Jesus has atoned for my sins, and God will accept me as new. All this, including my faith, is by God’s grace alone. I gain great strength and solace in the promise that heaven is for sinners who wish to be saints. I wish to be a saint, and through God’s grace I am.
“... every time you make a choice you are turning the central part of you, the part of you that chooses, into something a little different from what it was before.... You are slowly turning this central thing into a heavenly creature or a hellish creature.... To be the one kind of creature is heaven: that is, joy and peace and knowledge and power. To be the other means madness, horror, idiocy, rage, impotence, and eternal loneliness. Each of us at each moment is progressing to the one state or the other.”

that we can get on with the “real work” of being active in our churches? That what we do in our workplaces is not important, but what we do when we serve in the church—when we teach Sunday school, or when we lead a Bible study—is really important? Is that what gives our work value? That is not true either.

What is it, then, that gives our work value? It is simply that God Himself declares it to be important, that God desires our service in the whole of our lives, and that we are to present everything to Him in order to serve Him. Paul says this so strongly in Colossians 3:23, “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord and not for men...” “Whatever you do,” Paul tells us that it is the Lord Christ we are serving. God has declared our work to have value. It doesn’t need some other means outside itself. God’s word gives it value.

Secondly, our work has value because we are to offer it to the Lord. Your work and my work is to be holy. That means we are to set it apart so that we may honor God in what we do. Now that’s just as true for you if you are running a business as it is for me teaching the Word of God. It is not the job itself that is holy, it is offering it to God as service. I may preach the Gospel in a way that is totally unholy, and you may be a person engaged in business in a way that is completely holy. It is a question of whether you dedicate your work to God and whether you serve God rightly in what you do that makes your work holy.

The implications of work being a service to the Lord are many. Two prominent implications relate to both integrity and interpersonal relationships.

**Integrity in the Workplace**

Regarding integrity, Scripture calls us to such a high standard in the workplace because we are working for the Lord. When I go to my place of work, although I should certainly desire to please my boss, my first thought should not be, “What does my boss think of me?” My first thought should be that I am called to work, serving God with integrity. It is important that we please those for whom we work, but we are going to have a much more important accounting to give one day. Christ Himself will ask us how we worked. Were you faithful? Did you work hard? Are you someone who just worked to please other people or did you work with genuine righteousness? That is the challenge to all of us in our work, and in every area of our lives.

**Treatment of Co-Workers**

Serving in the workplace as unto the Lord also has implications upon our interpersonal relationships. As we serve the Lord, how we treat people should be reflective of the God we serve. Paul tells us that if we have people over us, we are to treat them with respect and honor.
Work: A Holy Calling

(continued from page 19)

Christ is to be our example. If you are in a place of authority and have people who work for you, you are to be their servant. Christ is the Lord of the Universe, but He became a servant. He served those who were under His authority. He served you and me, even by dying for us. He serves us every day by caring for us and all of our struggles and our needs, and being our Friend, Counselor, and Comforter. And we are called to be like Him. We are called to be servants of others. What you should be asking is, “How may I serve those above me, under me, around me? How may I look to their needs? How may I become their friend, support, helper?”

Full Worship of God

We need to get God's mind about matters in the workplace. Often on Sunday people feel like everything they have done during the week really does not matter. The Bible says we are to worship God in everything, and what we do on Sunday morning when we come to praise Him with our lips is simply bringing the whole of our week to declare His praises together as His people. There should be a seamless robe, if you like, between our workweek and our Sunday service—all of it is the worship of God, and all of it is to be holy. We need to honor that conviction in the way we pray for people in our churches and in the way we commend people. We should praise God for people in business who are righteous in what they do and who serve God in their places of work, or praise God for lawyers who are for widows and orphans. May we really learn to offer our work to God and to honor those who do so.

That is the challenge of God's word to us. As we consider that our work is to be done as unto the Lord, let us be shining lights of integrity, dedication, humility, service, and love.

Work: A Holy Calling

We are also to treat those under us in a way that pleases God. We have a Master in heaven and He will judge us for the way we treat people. Jesus says in Matthew 20:25-28, “...whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Christ is to be our example. If you are in a place of authority and have people who work for you, you are to be their servant.
Disciple-making is not a six-week nor a ten-week, nor even a thirty-week program. We have tended to bank our efforts on making disciples through programs, while not keeping a priority on the relational process.

Biblically, though, disciples are made in relationships. When I am forming a new triad/quad, I approach someone personally, eyeball to eyeball in the following way: First, I ask the Lord to put on my heart those to whom He is drawing me. I am looking for those who are hungry and teachable. When there is a settled conviction as to whom the Lord would have me approach, here is generally what I say to them: “Will you join me, walk with me as we grow together to become better disciples of Christ? I would like to invite you to meet with me and one or two others weekly for the purpose of becoming all that the Lord intends us to be. As I was praying about this relationship, I sensed the Lord drawing me to you.”

How does this relational approach differ from a program?

(1) Discipling relationships are marked by intimacy, whereas programs tend to be focused on information.

Programs operate with the assumption that if someone has more information, it will automatically lead to transformation. In other words, right doctrine will produce right living. Filling people’s heads with Scripture verses and biblical principles will lead to change in character, values, and a heart for God.

Alicia Britt Cole captures this difference between program and relationship: “Program was safer, more controllable, and reproducible—less risky, less messy, less intrusive. It seemed easier to give someone an outline than an hour, a well-worn book than a window into our humanity. How easy it is to substitute informing people for investing in people, to confuse organizing people with actually discipling people. Life is not the offspring of program or paper. Life is the offspring of life. Jesus prioritized shoulder-to-shoulder mentoring because His prize was much larger than information; it was integration.”

(2) Discipling relationships involve full, mutual responsibility of the participants, whereas programs have one or a few who do on behalf of the many.

Most programs are built around an individual or a few core people who do the hard work of preparation, and the rest come as passive recipients of their work. Of course, this is less true of a more egalitarian small group than it is
Making Disciples Jesus’ Way: A Few at a Time
(continued from page 21)

As much as I believe in the power of preaching for conviction and decision, I would be naïve to believe that preaching alone produces disciples. If preaching could produce disciples, the job would have been done.

In a discipling relationship the partners share equal responsibility for preparation, self-disclosure, and an agenda of life-change. This is not about one person being the insightful teacher, whereas the others are the learners who are taking in the insights of one whose wisdom far exceeds the others. Certainly maturity levels in Christ will vary, but the basic assumption is that in the give and take of relationships, the one who is the teacher and the one who is taught can vary from moment to moment.

(3) Discipling relationships are customized to the unique growth process of the individuals, whereas programs emphasize synchronization and regimentation.

The very nature of most of our programs is that they cannot take into account the uniqueness of the individual, which is essential to growing disciples. A program usually has a defined length. You commit to ten weeks and you are done. Often churches follow the academic calendar. Start a program in September when school starts and complete it in June in time for summer vacation. Once the cycle is complete, disciples are supposed to pop out the other end of the system. Completing the program is equated with making disciples.

Discipling relationships must necessarily vary in length of time, because no two people grow at the same speed. It is not just a matter of a forced march through the curriculum, but an individualized approach that takes into account the unique growth issues of those involved.

(4) Discipling relationships focus accountability around life-change, whereas programs focus accountability around content.

Programs of discipleship give the illusion of accountability. But upon closer look, the accountability is more focused on completing the assigned study curriculum than on following through on the changes or transformation into Christ-likeness that is expected of a disciple of Jesus.

Growth into Christ-likeness is the ultimate goal. The gauge of accountability in programs tends to be easily measurable, observable behaviors such as Scripture memory, completing the required weekly reading, and practicing spiritual disciplines. In a discipling relationship, the accountability focuses on learning to “observe or obey all that [Jesus] has commanded” (Matthew 28:19). For example, there is a huge difference between knowing that Jesus taught that we are to love our enemies, and actually loving our enemies. Discipling relationships are centered on incorporating the life of Jesus in all that we are in the context of all that we do.
The Environment of Transformation: The Three Necessary Ingredients

Without question, the setting where I have experienced the most accelerated transformation in the lives of believers has been in these triads/quads or small, reproducible discipleship groups. I call them the “hothouse” of Christian growth. Hothouses maximize the environmental conditions so that living things can grow at a rate greater than would exist under normal circumstances. The conditions are ripe for accelerated growth. This is what happens in a triad/quad.

Why is this? What are the climatic conditions in a discipleship group of three or four that create the hothouse effect? There are three ingredients that, when exercised in a balanced way, release the Holy Spirit to bring about a rapid growth toward Christ-likeness. This can be summarized in the following biblical principle: When we (1) open our hearts in transparent trust to each other (2) around the truth of God's word (3) in the spirit of mutual accountability, we are in the Holy Spirit’s hothouse of transformation.

Let’s look at what is contained in each of these three environmental elements that makes for accelerated growth and reproduction.

Climatic Condition #1: Transparent Trust

We return to the fundamental truth that has been repeated throughout this article: Intimate, accountable relationships with other believers is the foundation for growing in discipleship. Why is transparency a necessary condition for change? The extent to which we are willing to reveal to others those areas of our lives that need God’s transforming touch is the extent to which we are inviting the Holy Spirit to make us new. Our willingness to enter into horizontal or relational intimacy is a statement of our true desire before God of our willingness to invite the Lord to do His makeover in our life.

The small size of a triad/quad says that this is going to be close. There is little place to hide. The environment in which self-revelation is drawn out is increasing trust. Certainly trust does not happen instantaneously. Trust is an earned and developed quality. To get to the deep end of the pool, we must go through the shallower waters of the affirmation of encouragement, support through life’s difficulties, and prayerful listening in order to help our partners hear God’s voice in life’s decisions. Only then are we likely to venture in over our heads by confessing our patterns of besetting sin to one another.

My experience tells me that few believers either have the regular habit or the safe context in which they can reveal to another human being what lurks inside the recesses of their hearts. Until we get to the point where we can articulate to another those things that have a hold on us, we will live under the tyranny of our own darkness. James admonished his readers, “Confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed” (James 5:16). James makes a direct connection between

(continued on page 24)
confession and healing. In this context healing appears to be of a physical nature. Yet James believed that the health of one’s spirit directly affected the health of one’s body.

What is the connection between confession and freedom? Bringing the shame of our guilt into the light before trusted members of the body of Christ can in itself have a liberating effect. Once something is admitted before others, it begins to lose its power to control. Sin loves the darkness, but its power weakens in the light.

To learn to swim in the deep waters of transparent trust is a necessary element for accelerated growth in the Christian. Learning to swim can be a scary experience, especially when you are in over your head. But once you learn to trust the water to hold you up, you can relax and experience its refreshment.

Climatic Condition #2: Truth in Community
The second of three environmental elements that creates the conditions for the hothouse of accelerated growth is the truth of God’s word in community. I started with relationships because I believe that the context in which God’s word should be studied is community. A great failing today is that we have separated the study of God’s word from transparent relationships. We have been more concerned about getting our doctrine right than our lives right. It is not that knowledge is not important—it is. It is not that right doctrine is not important—it is. It is just not enough. Because the goal is to incorporate truth into our being, which happens as we process it with others.

It is particularly important in our day that a disciple has the opportunity to cover the essential teachings of the Christian life in a systematic and sequential fashion. We are living at a time when the average person has minimal foundation for their Christian faith. A generation ago, Francis Schaeffer and Elton Trueblood warned us in prophetic voice that we were one generation away from losing the memory of Christian faith in our culture. We are the next generation of which they spoke!

The Tonight Show with Jay Leno is an unlikely place to find evidence for this loss of memory. One night Leno took to the streets with microphone in hand asking people questions about their biblical knowledge. He approached two college-age women with the question, “Can you name one of the Ten Commandments?” Quizzical and blank looks led to this reply: “Freedom of speech?” Then Leno turned to a young man, “Who according to the Bible was eaten by a whale?” With confidence and excitement, he blurted out, “I know, I know, Pinocchio!” The memory of Christianity has been lost.

One of the participants in a discipling triad that I led was a woman about ten years my senior who had been raised in the home of a Congregational pastor. After we had completed our time together, she said to me, “Greg, I have something to confess. When you asked me to join this group, I didn’t think I had a whole lot to learn. After all I had been studying the Scriptures all of my life, having been raised in a home where the Bible was central. But I discovered as we covered the faith in a systematic and sequential order, that my understanding was much like a mosaic. I had clusters of tiles with a lot of empty spaces in between. This approach has allowed me to fill in all those places where tiles belong. I now see in a comprehensive fashion how the Christian faith makes sense of it all.”

(continued on page 26)
“I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: ‘I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher; but I don’t accept His claim to be God.’ That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice.

**Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse.**

You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.”

C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*  
Climatic Condition #3: Life-Change Accountability

The third environmental element that will contribute to creating just the right climatic conditions for accelerated growth is mutual, life-change accountability. In other words, the relationship between those on the discipleship journey together is covenantal. What is a covenant? A covenant is a written, mutual agreement between two or more parties that clearly states the expectations and commitments in the relationship. Implied in this definition is that the covenantal partners are giving each other authority to hold them to the covenant to which they have all agreed.

Yet there is a rub. To willingly give others authority to hold us accountable to what we say we will do is for most Westerners a violation of what we hold most dear. Robert Bellah’s ground-breaking research, Habits of the Heart, is a sociologist’s search for the core of the American character. He found that freedom from obligation defined the center of what it is to be an American. Here it is in a nutshell: We want to do what we want to do, when we want to do it, and no one better tell us otherwise. We want to be in control of our own choices, life direction, character formation, schedules, etc. Everything in us grates against accountability.

Yet accountability brings us back to the very core of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. A disciple is one under authority. Disciples of Jesus leave no doubt that it is Jesus who is exerting the formative influence over their lives. Jesus said, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily and follow me” (Luke 9:23). The way to get serious about this truth is to practice it by coming under authority in our covenantal relationships in Christ.

“The crisis at the heart of the church is a crisis of product.” I would challenge every pastor in America to schedule into his week a 90-minute time slot to meet with two or three others for the express purpose of discipling for multiplication. Can you imagine the impact on the quality and quantity of the product, if we began to see an organic multiplication of these reproducible groups over the next ten years? George Barna would be giving us very different statistics about the difference between believers and non-believers in America.

Notes

2. Mission Statement of Willow Creek Community Church, South Barrington, IL.
4. These generalities are in no way meant to demean the positive and powerful experiences that a one-on-one relationship has meant to many. When it comes to the multiplication of disciples, my experience teaches me that this generally does not lead to reproduction.
5. “Discipling is an intentional relationship in which we walk alongside other disciples in order to encourage, equip, and challenge one another in love to grow toward maturity in Christ. This includes equipping the disciple to teach others as well” (Ogden, Discipleship Essentials, 17).
Thoughts to Ponder: Of Resisting Temptation
(continued from page 2)

By flight alone we can not overcome, but by patience and true humility we become stronger than all our enemies.

He that only avoideth them outwardly, and doth not pluck them up by the roots, shall profit little; yea, temptations will the sooner return unto him, and he shall feel himself in a worse state than before.

By little and little, and by patience with long-suffering through God’s help, thou shalt more easily overcome, than with violence and thine own importunity.

Often take counsels in temptations, and deal not roughly with him that is tempted; but give him comfort, as thou wouldest wish to be done to thyself.

The beginning of all evil temptations is inconstancy of mind, and little trust in God.

For as a ship without a helm is tossed to and fro with the waves, so the man who is remiss, and apt to leave his purpose, is in many ways tempted.

Fire trieth iron, and temptation a just man.

We know not oftentimes what we are able to do, but temptations show us what we are.

Yet we must be watchful, especially in the beginning of the temptation; for the enemy is then more easily overcome, if he is not suffered to enter the door of our hearts, but is resisted without the gate at his first knock.

Wherefore someone said, “Withstand the beginnings, for later the remedy comes too late.”

For first there cometh to the mind a bare thought, then a strong imagination, afterward, delight, an evil motion, and then consent.

And so by little and little our wicked enemy getteth complete entrance, while he is not resisted in the beginning.

And the longer a man is negligent in resisting, so much the weaker does he become daily in himself, and the enemy stronger against him.

Some suffer great temptations in the beginning of their conversion; others at the end.

Others again are much troubled almost through the whole of their life.

Some are easily tempted, according to the wisdom and equity of the Divine appointment, which weigheth the states and worth of men, and ordaineth all things for the welfare of his own chosen ones.

We ought not therefore despair when we are tempted, but so much the more fervently to pray unto God, that he will grant us help in all tribulations; who, surely, according to the words of St. Paul, will give with the temptation a way of escape, that we may be able to bear it.

Let us therefore humble our souls under the hand of God in all temptations and tribulations, for he will save and exalt the humble in spirit.

In temptations and afflictions a man is proved how much he hath profited; and his reward is thereby the greater, and his graces do more eminently shine forth.

Neither is it any such great thing if a man be devout and fervent, when he feeleth no affliction; but if in time of adversity he bear himself patiently, there is hope then of great progress in grace.

Some are kept from great temptations, and in small ones which do daily occur, are often overcome; to the end that, being humbled, they may never presume on themselves in great matters, who are baffled in so small things. ■
The C.S. Lewis Institute is supported through the gifts of those who recognize the vital need for authentic discipleship in current culture. Gifts are very much appreciated and can be mailed or made via a secure online donation.

The C.S. Lewis Institute is recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) organization. All gifts to the Institute are tax deductible to the extent provided under law.

C.S. LEWIS INSTITUTE
8001 Braddock Road, Suite 300 • Springfield, VA 22151-2110
703/914-5602 • 800/813-9209 • 703/894-1072 fax
www.cslewisinstitute.org