

THE BEACON BEAM

September 2015

CONTENDING FOR THE TRUTH

Comfort for Christian Parents of Unconverted Children

By Jim Elliff

All Christian parents wish that God would show us something to do to secure our child's salvation, and then "we'll do it with all our might" because we love our child so much. Yet, God has not made salvation the effect of somebody else's faith; our son or daughter must come to Christ on his or her own. John shows us that all Christians are born into God's family "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, [that is, somebody else's will] but of God" (John 1:13).

Although salvation is the work of God and not something that we can do for our child, there is hope. Consider the following:

1. A true burden in prayer for your child is a gift from God. A persistent burden may indicate that God intends to give your child eternal life because authentic prayer always begins with God. Though we cannot be absolutely certain that we know all that God is doing, we should be optimistic if the burden continues.

2. The miracle of the new birth is no less possible for God if our child is attentive to Him or running away from Him. Our child is like all other children when it comes to God's grace. He is dead spiritually whether he is in church or not, whether he listened well to the truths we tried to teach him or did not, whether he has some interest in God now or has none at all. He may be converted in the

pig pen or the pew and we do not know in this case what is preferred by God.

3. God does hear our prayers. Though God has taught us that He chooses all who are His before the foundation of the world, He also taught us that we should pray, and not only pray, but expect the answer to our prayers. It is true that God is sovereign and it is just as true that He answers prayer. In fact, He could not answer prayer if He were not in control of all things.

4. We may have hope because of God's election of those who will come to Him. Every child is on his way to hell unless God stops him. God's election is our friend. We would have no hope for our child's salvation without

it, because no child would turn to Christ if left in his or her depravity (Romans 3:9-11). But given God's election of people for Himself, we can be encouraged.

5. Your child has some clear knowledge of what it means to be a true Christian. The Spirit certainly may bring this to bear at any time if this is His chosen method. Though it is no less a miracle for a knowledgeable child to be converted than a child with little knowledge; God always uses the gospel seed in every conversion.

"The miracle of the new birth is no less possible for God if our child is attentive to Him or running away from Him."

(Continued on page 8)

CONTENTS

<i>Comfort for Christian Parents...</i>pg. 1
<i>Beacon Highlights</i>pg. 2
<i>Calvinism and Hyper-Calvinism</i>pg. 3
<i>Transcendence and Immanence</i>pg. 4
<i>On the Feminine Side</i>pg. 6
<i>The Hammer and the Anvil</i>pg. 7



Beacon Baptist Church
1622 Kirkpatrick Road
Burlington, NC 27215

Phone: (336) 226-5205

Fax: (336) 227-3665

Website:
www.beaconbaptist.com

E-mail:
beaconbaptist@beaconbaptist.com

Schedule of Services:

Sunday
Morning Worship...9:30 AM
Sunday School.....11:10 AM
Evening Worship.....6:00 PM

Wednesday
Prayer Meeting.....7:00 PM
IMPACT Clubs.....7:00 PM
Teen Ministry.....7:00 PM

Beacon Highlights for September

Special Events for September

02	Teen/Parent Focus	15	Elders/Deacons Meeting
06	ESL	17	Silver Saints
07	Labor Day (Church Office closed)	20	Members Meeting Senior High YAC
12	Teen Homeplace Ministry		ESL
12-16	Ocean City Bible Conference/New Jersey	22	Coffee n' Courage
		27	ESL
13	Lord's Table ESL	29	Coffee n' Courage



Upcoming...

*You are invited to join us for our
Fall Bible Conference
 October 4-7, 2015
 with Dr. John McKnight
 from Darlington, Maryland*

Sympathy ~ We express our heartfelt sympathy to the family of:

Layton Morris
 Pam Moser
 Earle Jordan Thompson

The Beacon Broadcast

Monday thru Friday

WITA 1490 AM (Knoxville, TN)	9:30 a.m.
WKBA 1550 AM (Roanoke, VA)	10:00 a.m.
WKPA 1390 AM (Lynchburg, VA)	10:00 a.m.
WBAG 1150 AM (Burlington, NC)	12:15 p.m.
WTRU 830 AM (Winston-Salem, NC)	2:00 p.m.

Monday thru Sunday

WXTH-LP 101.7 FM (Richwood, WV)	10:05 a.m. 10:05 p.m.
---------------------------------	--------------------------

Sunday

WPCM 920 AM (Burlington, NC)	9:00 a.m.
WCRU 960 AM (Charlotte, NC)	9:30 a.m.
WBAG 1150 AM (Burlington, NC)	10:30 a.m.
WTRU 830 AM (Winston-Salem, NC)	10:30 a.m.
WDRU 1030 AM (Raleigh, NC)	10:30 a.m.
WSML 1200 AM (Graham, NC)	8:30 p.m.
WLES 560 AM (Richmond, VA)	10:30 a.m.
Harbour Light of the Windwards 1400 AM/94.5 FM (Caribbean)	9:30 p.m.

September Member Birthdays



01	Margie Holland Sue Ann Phillips
07	Dawn Burns Steve Lynch
10	Jan Via
14	Priscilla Starnes
15	Corey Oakley Kathy Rhoades
16	Linda Nance John Spencer
22	Doris Loftis Alan Starnes
23	Toni Brown
25	Bobby La Tour
30	Gary Barker

Happy Birthday!

September Missionary Birthdays

03	Luca Giuliani*
04	David Vaughn
16	Perpetua Johnson*
23	Libby Dreisbach
25	Rose Dreisbach*
28	Noah Johnson*
30	Heide Racke

Happy Birthday!

Beacon Pastors

Gregory N. Barkman	<i>Senior Pastor</i>
Michael R. Karns	<i>Minister of Christian Education</i>
Robert F. La Tour	<i>Minister of Families</i>
Gerald J. Counts	<i>Minister of Visitation</i>
Gregory L. Phillips	<i>Minister of Music</i>

Calvinism and Hyper-Calvinism

Greg Barkman

One of the barriers to a clear understanding of Calvinism is the confusion of Calvinism with Hyper-Calvinism. In the minds of many, these are one and the same. Five-point Calvinism IS Hyper-Calvinism to the uninformed. However, this is a serious misconception and needs to be corrected. Calvinism and Hyper-Calvinism are different systems. Although they share a common belief in the Doctrines of Grace, also known as the Five Points of Calvinism, they differ widely in several critical areas. Many of the criticisms leveled at Calvinism are actually characteristics of Hyper-Calvinism, not Calvinism. However, if people mistakenly believe they are identical, both will be tarred by the same brush.

WHAT IS HYPER-CALVINISM?

One of the major distinctions is in the means God uses to save sinners. Calvinism teaches that the preaching of the Gospel is necessary for salvation. Hyper-Calvinism denies that anything human is required. This can be tricky, so think carefully here. Both systems agree that God is able to save sinners anyway He pleases, with or without the preaching of the Gospel. But what God is able to do, and what He says He will do are two entirely different matters. The reason the preaching of the Gospel is necessary is because God says so (Romans 10:14-17). God has chosen to use His Word, proclaimed by human messengers, as a necessary condition to salvation. Since God uses the means of the proclaimed Word to produce faith in the human heart, no one is saved without Gospel proclamation. The fact that a sovereign and omnipotent God *could* change a sinners' heart directly without the prior proclamation of the Gospel is meaningless if God declares that He will not do so. God designs both the end, the salva-

tion of His elect, and the means, the proclamation of the Gospel. Removing the necessity of Gospel proclamation also removes the necessity of evangelism. The charge that Hyper-Calvinism is not evangelistic is true, but the charge that Calvinism is not evangelistic is false.

“The charge that Hyper-Calvinism is not evangelistic is true, but the charge that Calvinism is not evangelistic is false.”

Hyper-Calvinism does not believe in the universal proclamation of the Gospel, a teaching which goes by various names. Hyper-Calvinism does not believe it is the sinner's duty to believe the Gospel. These statements deserve more explanation, but by simply mentioning them, one can sense the deadening effect this has on evangelism. If God may save the elect without Gospel proclamation, what is the urgency of evangelism and missions? If the Gospel is not to be freely proclaimed to all men indiscriminately, but only to the elect or to those who are already under conviction of sin, how urgent is the work of evangelism? If sinners have no duty to believe the Gospel, how passionately should we urge people to believe the Gospel?

Hyper-Calvinism is also often antinomian, a term that means “against law.” It seems to pride itself in ambivalence about holiness and godly living. This is an outgrowth of its de-emphasis upon human responsibility. Considering men uninvolved

in God's work in nearly every area, this system regards human conduct as irrelevant to the Christian faith, and of little concern to God. Nothing could be further from the truth. Biblical Calvinism strongly emphasizes holy living as both a mark of conversion, and a responsibility of those who have experienced God's saving grace. Hyper-Calvinism, like other systems, has a variety of beliefs, and not all who are classified by this name believe exactly alike. I am dealing here with broad generalities to demonstrate distinctions between the two positions.

HOW SIGNIFICANT IS HYPER-CALVINISM?

In my experience, Hyper-Calvinism represents only a small fraction of those who believe the Doctrines of Grace. I have occasionally encountered Hyper-Calvinist statements in my reading, but not often. If I were deliberately looking for Hyper-Calvinistic writings, I'm sure I could find quite a few. I have also occasionally talked to someone who espouses Hyper-Calvinism, but I can probably count such encounters on the fingers of my two hands. My personal experience is limited, and yours may be different, but my impression is that Hyper-Calvinism represents a very small segment of Calvinism. I have encountered thousands of Calvinists in my lifetime, but only a handful of Hyper-Calvinists, at least as far as I know. I've probably been in the presence of some who did not discuss their views. Someone who is not a Calvinist and does not attend churches and conferences where Calvinists gather, could easily go a life time without meeting one real live Hyper-Calvinist. They exist, but they are not numerous.

However, Hyper-Calvinists are more influential than their actual

(Continued on page 5)

Transcendence and Immanence

Greg Phillips

Is God so other-worldly that we cannot possibly understand more than a tiny fraction of His existence? Is God so close to us that He knows our thoughts and is always with us, far more closely than any earthly relationship? Amazingly, the answer to both questions is yes! The Scriptures inform us beginning with Genesis 1:1 that God made the universe and is therefore not anything like we are. The scripture also clearly teaches in Psalm 139 and many other places that He knows us intimately. We are not able to easily understand that these two truths are both equally and powerfully true: God is not like us, and He is with us. The Bible affirms both the transcendence and immanence of God.

Left to our own fallen nature, we are going to ignore the general revelation that God is the Creator. The reality of creation tells us that God exists, and that He is not like us. Paul tells us in Romans 1:18-23 that we are sinfully inclined to suppress the truth in unrighteousness, ignoring His eternal power and Godhead. It is not insignificant that men vigorously reject claims that God is the Creator. The Creator must have existed before everything else came into being and He must have been powerful enough to have made everything. The obvious conclusion is that the Creator owns what He has made. To be the Creator is to be God. Instead of acknowledging and giving glory to the Creator, we turn our worship toward ourselves.

In addition to the general revelation that He is Creator, the Scripture teaches that God is "other," a meaning that suggests that He is not like us, or even something that we can comprehend. We may logically conclude that He must have preceded creation, but that is not adequate or sufficient to describe God; He is eternal. He always existed and will always

exist. He is always in every time. He is other. We may logically conclude that God is somewhere, but that is not adequate or sufficient to describe God; He is everywhere. He is every-

"As we seek to worship corporately and individually, we should seek to keep this scriptural balance of transcendence and immanence."

where in His creation at the same time, and at all times. He is other. We may logically conclude that God is powerful, but that is not sufficient to describe God; He is all-powerful. He is unlimited in His ability and power. He is other. We may logically conclude that God knows His creation, but that is not adequate or sufficient to describe God; He knows everything about everything. He is other. We can even logically conclude that God knows the future, but that is not adequate or sufficient to describe God; He is sovereign over the future. He plans, controls, and accomplishes whatever He pleases. He is other. In these ways and others that we cannot understand, God is transcendent.

King David's public prayer in 1 Chronicles 29:10-13 teaches both God's transcendence and immanence: *Blessed are You, Lord God of Israel, our Father, forever and ever. Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, the power and the glory, the victory and the majesty; for all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours; Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, And You are exalted as head over all. Both riches and honor come from You, and You reign over all. In Your*

hand is power and might; in Your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all. Now therefore, our God, we thank You and praise Your glorious name. David's prayer acknowledges the greatness of God, and yet calls Him Father!

The ultimate expression of immanence is Immanuel, *God with us*. In the incarnation, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ we see the love of God manifested toward us, individually and personally. Jesus, fully God and fully man, loves me. The Holy Spirit indwells me. God has *predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved* (Ephesians 1:5-6).

As we seek to worship corporately and individually, we should seek to keep this scriptural balance of transcendence and immanence. Contemporary theologian John Frame writes: *A biblically balanced view of worship must take into account both God's transcendence and his immanence, his exaltation and his nearness, his majestic holiness and his immeasurable love. This balance is not always easy to maintain. Churches that focus on divine transcendence are in danger of making God appear distant, aloof, unfriendly, unloving, devoid of grace. Churches that focus on God's immanence sometimes lose sight of his majesty and purity, his hatred of sin, and the consequent seriousness of any divine-human encounter. To maintain this balance, we must go back again and again to the Scriptures themselves so that we may please God in worship rather than merely acting on our own intuitions.*



Calvinism and Hyper-Calvinism

Greg Barkman

(Continued from page 3)

numbers because of common misconceptions regarding Calvinism. Since Calvinists are frequently mislabeled Hyper-Calvinists and Hyper-Calvinistic doctrines are erroneously ascribed to them, this position acquires a significance beyond its true influence. Hyper-Calvinism is often the whipping boy of anti-Calvinists, and thus takes on sizeable, though grossly inflated proportions. In real life, Hyper-Calvinism is rare. In the minds of many, it is pervasive. But for those who are interested in truth, Hyper-Calvinism is quickly whittled down to size.

HOW DOES IT DIFFER FROM CALVINISM?

Calvinism embraces Scriptural teaching about human responsibility. Hyper-Calvinism diminishes it. The key is to achieve the correct Biblical balance, which is sometimes challenging. Arminianism over-emphasizes human responsibility to the neglect of Divine sovereignty. Where these two truths intersect, the gavel comes down on the side of human responsibility every time. Man's free will is protected and preserved at all costs, even at the expense of God's sovereign glory. The result is a system which makes God small and man large. Calvinism

understands the proper relationship between the human and the Divine, but never exalts human activity above Divine sovereignty. Hyper-Calvinism makes the opposite mistake. Instead of over-emphasizing human initiative, it emphasizes Divine sovereignty at the expense of human responsibility. Although it is impossible to exalt God's power, majesty, glory and sovereignty beyond what is true, it is possible to ignore the Bible's equally clear teaching about human duty. This is the mistake of Hyper-Calvinism. In its commendable quest to give God His rightful place, it fails to give man his God-given place. To refuse to accept what God Himself says about the responses of human beings, and the ways God chooses to deal with people, does not honor God. It dishonors Him by failing to believe all His Word. The result is a system which makes man almost irrelevant. Each system believes itself to be Biblical. Each encourages people to read the Bible through the lens of one particular system. I leave it to the reader to weigh the evidence and decide for himself which system best represents Biblical truth. My purpose for writing is simply to explain why Calvinism is not Hyper-Calvinism, and to encour-

age you to distinguish one from the other.

WHY ARE THEY FREQUENTLY CONFUSED?

To a Calvinist, the errors of Hyper-Calvinism are fairly easy to detect, and are seldom mistaken for historic Calvinism. However, to an Arminian, the two systems can look very similar, and it is easy to confuse them. It is all a matter of perspective. The Calvinist is closer to the theology of Hyper-Calvinism, which enables him to better recognize both the similarities and differences. The Arminian is examining things from afar, and from a distance, systems that share some similarities are easily blurred. Mountain peaks that are distinctly separate up close can appear merged from a distance. I challenge you to examine the doctrines of Calvinism through an unclouded lens, and hopefully you will discover that many common criticisms are actually untrue. Feel free to critique Calvinism from the Bible, but please don't flail blindly at a straw man. You may forfeit much precious truth if you do.

The Meaning of Justification

Justification is central to the Christian faith because it answers the most fundamental question of all: How can a sinful human being be righteous before a holy God?

"Justification" is a legal word that refers to a person's judicial standing. It denotes basically a sentence of acquittal. Justification comes from the court of law. It describes the Christian's total relationship to God from the perspective of law. To justify is to render a favorable verdict, to declare a person to be in the right, to announce forgiveness in legal terms. Justification is vindication. It is a decision of the court stating that someone has a right relationship to God and his law. It is the pronouncement that, as far as the law is concerned, the defendant is not guilty, but innocent.

One way to define justification is to contrast it with its opposite, which is condemnation. To condemn is to declare a person unrighteous. It is the judicial verdict that, as far as the law is concerned, he is guilty.

Philip G. Ryken, *The Message of Salvation*

If you visited this page a month ago you might recall I started with a question: *How do you deal with ongoing difficulties? Do you stew over the hard things in your life, or do you chew instead on truth that informs and corrects your heart and mind? Stew or chew?*

Since I'm pretty sure you do some of both, I have another question for you: Which do you prefer? Is it possible a person might actually *choose* a state of agitation and anxiety over the option of restful trust in God? Counterintuitive as it may seem, yes, fretting is often our first choice, the place we *want* to go. Stewing can become our preset, the thought pattern we go to automatically when our minds are not occupied elsewhere. We've been there so many times it's become familiar and even comfortable. But why, when there is something better, do we choose that dark place?

Several months ago I heard a well-known surgeon interviewed on the radio. His specialty is back surgery and he's performed hundreds of procedures over a long career. I was surprised to hear him say that most of those back surgeries were unnecessary and unsuccessful. Most back pain, he said, was due to anger and therefore not helped by surgery. And did he have a solution? Yes. He had begun teaching his patients to change their *habitual thought patterns!* His answer to the problem of pain-inducing anger was to find new pathways for the brain to travel. (We usually think of habits as being deeds, but I think the greater percentage of our habits are operating in our thought life.)

You know how it works. First there's the prompt, something we see or hear that triggers a memory of a hurtful episode, an injustice, or person with whom we have 'a problem.' There in front of us lies the path we've been down so many times before and off we

go. Our thoughts may be in the form of the anger that the surgeon saw in his patients. Or they might be old en- vies, a new discontent, or one of the fruits of pride. Hate, fear, anxiety, depression, and apathy litter this rutted road. And while we travel, what is happening in our minds? Every time we walk that route we are wearing hard and bare those pathways in our brain, packing down that dirt on the path a bit harder with each pass. Do this often enough and after a while we don't need the trigger...we go there unbidden because it has become a habit. This negative (sinful!) way we think about the circumstances, the people, and the events of our lives can become so much a part of us that the attitudes begin to show on the outside, and they become characteristic of us. We are defined by them. We begin to be just like our thoughts. We become what we think. We may not recognize the change in ourselves, but others begin to see it.

How do we change the way we think? What, if anything can be done about those thought patterns which keep us agitated, anxious, unbelieving? Can a hard-as-rock dirt path ever sprout and sustain new growth again? Yes! But how do you grow grass on a worn pathway? Stop using it! And how do you stop using it? Find another way to go, a detour around the familiar way. The key to finding change is a new path! The twelfth chapter of Romans is full of familiar phrases: *"I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."* There it is, the new way! What we need is a renewed mind! We need new ways to think...new pathways

to take...and as we do so, our old ways of thinking will be changed, those old paths disappearing under new growth. What is the grass that can cover those pathways in our brains? It's grace!

Years ago we discovered the remains of a unpaved road in the woods beyond our house. From the remaining evidence we think it was bordered by a barbed wire fence and was probably a farm road at one time. It was barely discernible when we first found it and by last spring I couldn't locate it at all. Occasionally we still pull up bits of the barbed wire, but that alone remains. The old roadway can no longer be found because it's been unused for too many years. My prayer for you and me, my friend, is that our old pathways of sinful thought patterns will meet the same fate as that old farm road, that God will give us renewed minds resulting in new paths paved with truth.

But we are still left with a question: How does this renewal happen, and from where does this grace, *this help*, come? It won't come from just wishing for it, or from saying we should. It will be found in the intentional reading of God's Word. It will come from surprising passages found as we systematically read the message sent by God to help us with just this kind of problem. It will come as we read examples of right thinking from which we can learn how to pray for help. And when we find new paths to use, it will require disciplining ourselves to use them when we'd rather go the old way. Though every now and then a bit of barbed-wire attitude may surface, little by little, those old paths will fade away. The grass of grace grows quickly in the sweet climate of the Word.



The Hammer and the Anvil

Dr. David Cashin

Future trends are notoriously hard to predict. But those of us who have lived in Europe have noticed that, in the area of social trends, the United States tends to follow Europe's lead, with perhaps a 10 to 20 year delay. For example, homosexual marriage has been the law of the land in numerous European countries; in some cases for more than a decade. What do European trends tell us about the future of evangelical Christianity in Europe, and by analogy, in America?

What I call the Hammer and the Anvil, identify two social trends that have strongly marginalized and stereotyped Christianity in European public opinion and are likely to do the same in America.

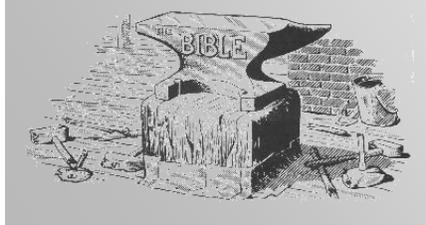
The Anvil is terrorism.

How do Europeans explain terrorism? "Fundamentalist religion." I watch Swedish television regularly and the monickers of "bokstavstrogn" (literalists) and "fundamentalister" (fundamentalists) are ubiquitous in explanations of terrorism. The specific religion is usually not named, and so the attitude tends to be generalized to all "fundamentalists." Pragmatically, discussions have sounded like this one from American writer and poet Bruce Bawer in "Partisan Review:"

"One night over dinner, a Dutch writer of my acquaintance—a maverick gay conservative who could usually be counted on to speak his mind unflinchingly—insisted proudly that the Netherlands, unlike the U.S., had no Religious Right. I knew very well, of course, that the Netherlands did indeed have a Religious Right; that it consisted of Islamic, not Christian, fundamentalists."

In European media, evangelicals (fundamentalists) are considered, potentially, no different than terrorists. This explains the assiduous

*"We don't
demonize, nor do
we stereotype,
but we speak
the truth."*



search of journalists for "Christian" terrorists. There have been numerous articles in Europe that identified Anders Breivik, the Norwegian mass murderer, as a "Christian," despite all contrary evidence. It fits the stereotype. One might even say that Christianity is blamed for Islamic terrorism, not as causing it, but because their belief structures are superficially similar thus they must be capable of the same things. As Christian thinker Donald Hank wrote in the "Worldview Times:" "The clear implication is that deeply held faith is dangerous."

The Hammer is homosexuality.

A self-identified Christian in Europe today will often be asked first, "What do you think of homosexuality?" If the Christian says anything other than total acceptance and "celebration" of the lifestyle, he or she is immediately branded a bigot. Try this with someone on a train in Europe and you'll see what I mean. The results of these two trends can be seen in Pew Foundation public opinion polls in Europe concerning views on religions. Islam and Judaism have

both seen a gradual increase in negative public views amounting to a 20-25 percent increase over the past seven years. While the negative views of Christians are still at a lower level they have been increasing at a much faster rate in some countries, in some cases doubling or more than doubling during the same period. Spain, for instance, went from 10 percent negative view of Christians to a 25 percent rate in three years. This rise seems to have corresponded to the introduction of homosexual marriage in Spain.

How should biblically minded Christians respond to being caught between the hammer and anvil? First, keep the main thing, the main thing. The main thing is Jesus. Second, when questioned on either of these topics, we speak the truth as it is stated in Scripture. We don't demonize, nor do we stereotype, but we speak the truth. The Bible defines homosexual behavior as sin, period. I am not here to judge people who engage in that behavior pattern, but someday God will. Muslims, who deny the cross and the sonship of Jesus, are lost, period. That is true whether they are terrorists or not. I am responsible to share the good news with both groups. Finally, recognize and submit to the sovereignty of God. We are not in control of this culture, we never were and we never will be. God will accomplish His purposes in the midst of this corrupt and dying generation. We will seek the lost, we will persuade the lost and we will trust God to supply the fruit.

Dr. David Cashin, *Connection*
CIU Professor of Intercultural Studies
Columbia International University

Comfort for Christian Parents...

Jim Elliff

(Continued from page 1)

6. Your own disobedience in the past will not ultimately keep your child from becoming a believer. It is pointless to berate yourself for any wrong behavior on your part as if it were the reason your child is without Christ. This doesn't mean that we as parents should not repent and do better, and even admit wrong to our children. But the reason your child is without Christ is ultimately related to his or her own sin. *Every* Christian parent is inconsistent in some way and is in a process of sanctification that leaves the parent short of perfection. This has never been a barrier to God if He desires to save your child. Illustrations abound of children who come from far less godly families who are nonetheless converted to Christ. In fact, this may have been the case in your own experience.

7. Some children may need the experience of being away from parental care in order to face up to their own

need for Christ. The sense of need for many may be discovered only in the context of difficulties. We should not be surprised if it takes some solo flying before a child learns that he or she really needs another as his pilot.

8. Remember that there are lots of people who have come to appreciate their history prior to coming to Christ. I'm not saying that these people would not have wanted conversion earlier, but that the pain of their pre-conversion history has left them with compassion, understanding, knowledge, testimony, and a burden that they would perhaps not have had any other way. They've seen God's wisdom in the timing of their conversion. This may well be so with your child. Paul said that there was a reason he was chosen to be converted even though he was a murderer, blasphemer and violent aggressor—so that people will see and have hope that God can save anyone. God has a unique journey for each child.

9. You cannot save your child yourself no matter how hard you try. You are in a position of trust alone. This is good because it is the only way to please God (Heb. 11:6). Your rest in God, while simultaneously praying to the God who answers prayer, will be an encouragement to others in the same situation. It will also help you respond to your child more positively, and will make your life far more joyful than your anxiety ever could.

10. Finally, remember that God has a purpose in all He does. We will one day rejoice that God has done a perfect job of ruling His universe. When we acknowledge this and put God even above our children, we will actually demonstrate to our child the way a Christian is to live.

Copyright © 2003 Jim Elliff
Christian Communicators Worldwide, Inc.
www.ccwtoday.org



The Beacon Beam
Beacon Baptist Church
PO Box 159
Alamance, NC 27201

Return Service Requested

PRSR STD
US POSTAGE PAID
ALAMANCE, NC
PERMIT NO. 3