

The Academy Perspective

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Vada Lee Barkley, Editor

MY EXPERIENCE WITH AN HMO

by Vada Lee Barkley

Everybody's talking about HMOs. A friend said recently, "We like our HMO; it only costs \$19 a month." What senior wouldn't like that? A good Medicare supplement plan costs five to six times that much.

Several years ago, before all the hoopla, I learned the hard way that you get what you pay for. For health insurance, that's an important lesson. In fact, had I not escaped an HMO, I couldn't see to write this complaint.

During my eighteen months with an HMO, my primary physician quit accepting HMO patients. He could never find an ophthalmologist to treat my glaucoma. He said they could test my pressure at their clinic.

After I had to change doctors, I went in to have my eye pressure tested. The nurse asked, "Did the doctor tell you to have this test?" I said, "No, but my ophthalmologist always tested the pressure every three months."

She asked the same question when I requested a blood pressure test. After it tested high, she said the doctor would want to see me.

In the doctor's office, I questioned the accuracy of the eye pressure test. The technician had problems with the equipment. And my pressure was the lowest it had been in years. The doctor insisted the test was accurate. I knew it wasn't.

Before leaving the clinic, I told a nurse I was getting out of the HMO. Her response: "I didn't say this, but if you want good care, I think you're wise."

Soon after that, my prosthesis supplier told me that the HMO was four months behind in their payments to him.

On his evening news Tom Brokaw has just finished a series of harrowing reports dealing with HMOs. Evidently they still haven't cleaned up their act.

Thank God I escaped with 20/20 vision.

As Attorney General Janet Reno said about scams, "If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is."

February 9 Meeting

Several international students have been invited to talk about their experiences and impressions relating to enrollment at SNU.

For Your Information

Sam's Tours, Inc. has just released brochures describing upcoming trips. New York NIROGA as Schroon Lake in the Adirondacks, New England and three Canadian provinces--via air, motorcoach, and ferry ship--September 20 to October 5. And Branson and Georgia NIROGA at St. Simons Island--via chartered motorcoach--October 27 to November 10.

Sam and B. Kaye have volunteered to arrange a one-day foliage tour for Academy members this fall.

HELPFUL HINTS FOR HAPPY CHRISTIANS

Brief glimpses into Philippians

by Lyle Flinger

Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus was so radical and dramatic that we wonder how God had prepared him, through His grace, for this sudden encounter. Surely he had some idea what conversion would cost him, but Paul was so convinced of God's call that he decided any suffering would be a small price to pay for the rewards of knowing Christ. And the suffering came--full force! It came full force because Paul lived full force. Paul decided to "go all the way"--far beyond average and mediocrity. And that literally invites the enemy to attack!

In this month's "glimpse into Philippians" we examine in a very limited way how Paul so adequately handled every difficult situation so he could write victoriously: "I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances." (4:12) So let's look at his "secret" so we can apply it to our lives.

1. His perspective. In 1:12 Paul is suggesting that his circumstances, though painful to him, are removing barriers that have slowed the advance

of the Gospel. Paul was in prison; it was not by choice but it was one of the "givens" of life that happen to all of us. We often can do very little about the "givens" but we can accept them and have victory in spite of them. By turning to Christ and fully trusting His providential guidance we can, like Paul, see how God can work them out for our good.

2. His "praise attitude." In spite of his bleak and discouraging circumstances, we see joy shining through fourteen times in this short epistle. He had faithfully served God and the

Church and yet he is in prison. To rejoice in the Lord means simply to find your joy in Christ. So Christian joy is not a feeling, it is a Person. To find Christ is to find joy. Our inner attitudes do not have to reflect our outward circumstances.

3. His total commitment. Nothing underlines Paul's commitment and total dedication as well as this letter to the Church at Philippi. The most important segment to demonstrate this is 3:7-14. It really does not matter to Paul what happens in the future. He can die with a martyr's crown or live for continued fruitful service. For himself, Paul would rather depart. For his friends, he would rather stay. But the choice is not his, but God's. "It's all right." Paul's primary goal was to "know Christ in the very depth of that meaning. He believed that Christ had a vision and a purpose for which He had grasped him and that he must press on, so as not to disappoint the Lord.

4. His concentration on the "now." In 3:12-14, Paul says he is "forgetting the things that are behind." He will never glory in any of his achievements nor will he be defeated by any of his past failures. Paul had a lot of tortured memories. But we must never let the pain of the past poison either our present or our future. He says he is "straining toward what is ahead." Paul sincerely believes that he does not have to stay where he is spiritually, but that a boundless horizon stretches out before him. Finally, Paul says, "I press on toward the goal." The past cannot be relived and the future is not yet ours to live. So we must concentrate on making this day, moment by moment, a time of complete obedience, doing with excellence the thing that lies nearest at hand, and, in the process, reflect more and more the image of Christ in us.

There are so many other things in this epistle which give insights into how Paul handled life so successfully. We read of his prayer and fasting, his grateful attitude, his concern for others, his determination, his suffering, his encouragement of others, his humility, his keen insight, his singleness of purpose. But, for now, this must suffice. Paul is one whom we should emulate, and that would certainly please both him and God.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED?

by Wini Howard

Many of us have read Gone with the Wind or at least seen the film. The ending leaves one with a big question mark as to what eventually happened to Scarlett and Rhett. A

sequel has been written by a lesser known writer. (I have read some of it and it is not particularly satisfying.)

A few mornings ago when my husband and I were sharing from Chuck Colson's devotional book, A Dangerous Grace, we came across this account of the two people who were models for Scarlett and Rhett. Their names were Emelyn Louise Hannon and Rhett Turnipseed. Rhett really did walk out on Emelyn and joined the Confederate Army. (The story was finally told by Wesley Pruden in The Washington Times.)

After the war was over, Rhett became a drifter and a gambler. But on Easter Sunday morning (in 1871 in Nashville), he went to a Methodist revival meeting and was converted. After attending classes at Vanderbilt University, he became a Methodist circuit riding preacher.

A young lady in his flock ran away and it was said she was in a brothel in St. Louis. And yes, the madame was Emelyn. He won her freedom in a card game with Emelyn.

There was a happy ending for all. The young girl married well, and Emelyn left her job as a madame and was converted. She too joined the Methodist church and started an orphanage for Cherokee children. She died in 1903 and her grave is clearly marked.

This just tells us that truth is still stranger than fiction. And it also reminds us of the great redeeming grace of our God (cf. Rom. 5:20).

**A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE
IN AN AGE OF SCIENCE**
by Robert L. Griffin

I have just finished reading an article by Paul Saltman who is a professor of biology at the University of California at San Diego. (Chronicle of Higher Education) In his essay, "Humanists and Scientists Must Try to Give Us a New Mythology," Dr. Saltman decries the fact that humanists have given up the field to the scientist by discarding a sense of wonder, by capitulating to the notion that everything can be explained within the confines of scientific methodology. The professor says the church has also failed us by failing to recognize that science and religion have different functions. Instead of trying to win a debate with science, religion should identify a symbiotic relationship with science. The implication, though not stated, is that science should recognize the same symbiosis (symbiosis in biology is the union for life of two dissimilar organisms). The point is well taken.

Life would be poorer if we failed to appreciate the contributions of both religion and science. Science deals with the "search for the nature of the universe in which we live,

for the rules that govern the universe from the subatomic particle to the outer reaches of space and time. Science tests the relationship that can be observed and verified experimentally, and it allows us to understand ourselves in this immense and wondrous place...Science is what is. And technology is the application of science, of knowing, to our lives." While it is true that both religion and science begin with presuppositions that begin with faith; thereafter, the two move on the basis of different functions and tests of truth.

Religion, through its theologians and philosophers, has been correct in trying to give a rational explanation for its insights. But in the final analysis religion does not depend on reason or universally accepted experimentation for its genius. Religion's breath of life is faith. You cannot give a universally accepted satisfactory rational explanation for the Virgin Birth of Christ, or His Resurrection. But you can have assurance of the reality of these events experientially, through faith; and what the influence of that one solitary life can have on you as far as your values are concerned.

There are two ways of knowing: the knowledge derived via rational, universally observable experimentation--science; and knowledge that comes through the assurance of reality knows through the venture of faith. Science and religion are in a symbiotic relationship; both are dissimilar but bound together in the human pursuit of knowing: Knowledge about nature--science; and knowledge about God--religion. Some of us believe that it's quite possible the symbiosis would be merged into a union if we had the perspective of God--but that is another question.

We have recently come through the Christmas season. There the focus is shifted from the exclusive rational to the faith oriented domain: The baby Jesus--born of a virgin--teachings about God as a loving heavenly Father, resurrection from the dead, eternal life. Here is a dimension of understanding known only to faith.

There are various ways to portray the symbiosis between religion and science. One might say, "Seeing is believing." (science) while the other viewpoint would declare, "believing is seeing," (religion). St Anselm in a famous sentence says, "For I do not seek to understand (know) that I may believe, but I believe in order that I may understand (know)...unless I believed, I should not understand (know)."

As I consider the birth of Christ with something of the wonder of my childhood's faith, I would like to move beyond the scientific data couched in the historical fact of the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. I would like to assert I believe that in this one "solitary life" we have the essence of the character of God. In this one, born "Prince of Peace," we have

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the source of peace for individuals and nations as we embody His teachings.

Though I cannot comprehend this miracle by approaching it from the methodology of science, yet by believing I come to understand its meaning. Science has its function. I am delighted to have lived during the time of unprecedented scientific advances in knowledge of the world of nature. The other approach to knowledge of a different kind is also meaningful. I stand before the semblance of a babe in a manger and later an empty tomb, and I believe.

CAN AMERICAN DEMOCRACY SURVIVE?
(conclusion)-by Paul Gray

What is the answer to all this? To begin, Americans will have to recognize that democracy cannot survive unless we return to the form of government that made us a morally strong people. Anarchy or dictatorship await us unless we restore the Judeo-Christian Ethic as the underpinning of our society. Honesty, fair play, integrity must take the place of "selfish individualism."

How can we remedy this situation? 1. By honestly admitting that America today is moving in the WRONG direction. We can never be helped unless we acknowledge that we have a need! 2. By facing the fact that American Democracy is a special form of government that will not work properly without certain guidelines. 3. By understanding that the essence of the Judeo-Christian Ethic is not just an American idea, but that it coincides with "the accumulated Wisdom of the ages." It is what all men, in their best moments, know is true, be they Christian, Jew, Muslim, Hindu, agnostic, sinner, or people in any other category. 5. By recognizing that in a Democracy there must be some well-defined restraints, else our Freedoms will kill us. Any extreme is wrong. There must be some limits. 6. By being willing to put forth a strenuous effort for the sake of our country, our culture, and our children, even if it means real hardship. 7. By forming SMALL GROUPS in your community, then enlarge these groups by including all "thinking people" in YOUR Area. 8. By standing up and speaking out. By majoring on what unites us. By making your voice heard in YOUR State, then the Nation, and especially Washington. 9. By building a network of these Groups cross the Nation. Be Patient, hold steady. Use 5 years- or more- to turn things around. 10. LAST BUT NOT LEAST, by praying to YOUR God in deep sincerity and devotion.

Certainly, all is not lost! The beautiful thing about a democracy is that matters can be changed if we, the people, will make up our minds, and unite our efforts, we can recover our heritage. American Democracy can survive!