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J. R. Ewing and the Biblical View of Success *Christian Parenting - Part One*

The Rev. Michael R Gilstrap

Perhaps one of the most difficult things for Christian parents to come to grips within our materialistic society is the relationship of *success* and *faith*. If a reporter walked up to almost any set of Christian parents and asked, "Do you want your child to be successful?", the answer would invariably be "yes." But if you're like me, you immediately would want to qualify your "yes." I want my child to be successful, but I don't want him to be *worldly*. Or, I want my child to be successful, but I don't want him to become a slave to his success. Or better yet, I want my child to be successful, but I don't want him to be like Ivan Boesky or Jimmy Swaggert.

In other words, most of us would answer that yes, we want success for our children, but more importantly, we want them to be *faithful*. Therein lies the tension for the Christian parent. Out of a heart of love for our children, we want the best for them — at least better than we have; but out of devotion to our Lord, we want our children to be faithful.

What are Christian parents to do? Some parents teach their children that they will never have the "good things" in life. They teach that Christians are denied the enjoyment of the world. For them, spirituality is other-worldly in a very radical sense. For these parents, true success is measured by the extent of self-denial practiced or the amount of suffering and affliction endured. Their motto is "in this world we shall have tribulation." And it is certainly the case that for a Christian to be wealthy is very dangerous. After all, our Lord Himself said that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to get to heaven (St. Luke 18:24-25)!

Other Christian parents go the other direction, showering upon their children material benefits without discrimination, teaching their children that the sign of God's blessing is the "this-worldly" accumulation of things. True success is measured by the size of your bank balance or the size of your house or the cost of your car. For them the motto is "God owns the cattle on a thousand

hills, and if you are really in His will, He's going to give some to you."

The J.R. Ewing Syndrome

Both of the above positions have elements of truth in them. It is certainly true that Christians are citizens of another kingdom — the Kingdom of God. We are to be *in the world* but not *of the world*. Nor are Christians exempt from suffering and tribulation. Nevertheless, it is also true that the *world* is God's creation, and He called it *good*. Christians must not despise the world and the things of the world. Wealth, prestige, fame, and influence are not evil *in themselves*. They become sinful when improperly used or sought after.

The tension between faith and success arises, I believe, from a false view of success. Because we live in

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the late 20th century and are immersed in a highly materialistic and largely unchristian civilization, we tend to view success in terms of how it is defined in the culture at large. Some Christians then react against it (and rightly so!) by abandoning all notions of success for themselves or their children. Others, as we've seen, fall victim to it by baptizing our culture's materialism with Christian phraseology and concepts.

Both views, however, fall victim to the *J.R. Ewing Syndrome*: the identification of true success with wealth and material prosperity. In both responses, success is viewed solely in terms of what one has (or doesn't have). J.R. Ewing, the wealthy scion of *Dallas* fame, is cited as one who is successful by the world's standards. He is successful simply because he is wealthy, powerful, famous, and holds a prestigious position in society. Some Christians look at J.R. and say, "If that's success, then I want no part of it. Just look at what all that wealth gets you! A broken home, immoral lifestyle, and a miserable **existence!**" Other Christians look at J.R. and say, "Just because J.R. is a dastardly devil doesn't mean that everyone with money will end up that way. Look at Abraham, Joseph, and Job. Those dudes were rich, but they weren't J. R.'s! It's okay to have wealth. After all, why should the devil have **all** the good things?"

The problem with both of these views is **the** same. Both identify success with wealth and material prosperity. Each are responding in different ways, but both see true success in terms of assets gained. Both accept worldly presuppositions and fail to ask **the** question "How does God define success?"

True Success

What then is true success? As Christian parents, what are we to teach our children about success? Is it wrong to teach our children to seek to accrue wealth for themselves, or should we hammer a message of **self-denial** and other-worldliness into their heads?



The Geneva Review

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I think the answer lies in a **statement Jesus** made during His Sermon on the Mount. Jesus **leads** up to this statement by telling His disciples not to lay up for themselves treasures on earth, but to **lay** up for **them-**selves treasures in heaven "for where the treasure is, there your heart will be also" (St. Matthew 6: 19ff). In other words, the most important consideration is where our desire is — our motivation — why we do the things we do. If what is most valuable to us are the *things* of the world, then our heart is not in the right place. If we are *servicing* things — if all that we do is for the purpose of getting more *things* — then we **cannot** at the same time *serve* God (St. Matthew 6:24).

He goes on to point out that concern about the things of this life, represented by food, drink, and clothing, is misplaced. God clothes the grass of **the** field.. **He** feeds the birds of the air.. **He** will also take care of His children.

Our Lord then makes the statement I want to focus upon. He concludes the section by saying, "But seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (St. Matthew 6:33). Unlike the Gentiles, who crave food, drink, clothing, etc. — who spend all their time and all their energy in the amassing of *things*, Christ's followers are to seek His Kingdom first.

True success therefore, must be seen primarily in terms of seeking the Kingdom of God. To put it in different language, we must say that "true success" is the progressive realization of a worthy idea or goal whose ultimate goal is the Kingdom of God.

With this definition, Christian parents are free to impart to their children a life-objective that is at once particular and comprehensive. It is particular in that it states categorically that any pursuit that is inconsistent with seeking God's kingdom is forbidden. At the same time, this life-objective is as comprehensive as **all** creation!

Can a young man or young women justly pursue a career where the material rewards are significant? Absolutely! Joseph of Arimathea was a wealthy man who shall forever be remembered for his act of philanthropy in providing a tomb for the crucified Christ. In our day, **Mary Crowley** was a fabulously wealthy woman who gave literally millions to the cause of Christian education.

On the other hand, may a young person select a **career** where **the** material rewards will be **somewhere between** slim and none? (Like ruining a religious ministry?) **Most** certainly! Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) **began** a monastic movement that resulted in **one** of the largest evangelical revivals in history. He

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The Growth of the Kingdom

Peter J. Leithart

The Bible clearly teaches that, once established, the kingdom *grows*. Jesus taught this in several of His parables in Matthew 13. The kingdom is like leaven in a lump of dough that eventually leavens the whole lump. Moreover, several Old Testament passages indicate that the kingdom *will* grow, once established. Isaiah 9:7 tells us that the government of the coming "child" will increase forever. In Nebuchadnezzar's dream, the kingdom is like a small stone, cut without hands, that crushes the kingdoms of the world and grows into a mountain that fills the entire earth (Daniel 2:44-45). Ezekiel uses the imagery of a river flowing from under the throne of God, which expands until it becomes a river that cannot be forded (Ezekiel 47: 1-5). The book of Acts records the spectacular growth of the early church, again and again citing the thousands of people who came into the kingdom through repentance and faith.

But does God's kingdom grow at the *expense* of Satan's kingdom? Does the growth of the Church mean that Satan's kingdom is getting smaller and weaker? Several considerations lead us to answer these questions affirmatively. First, since it is impossible that a man should serve two masters, when someone becomes a Christian, he necessarily rejects the mastery of Satan, a fact formalized in many Christian baptismal liturgies, which ask the catechumen, "Do you renounce the devil and all his works and all his ways?" The Bible presents a clear either/or at this point: either you are in the kingdom of God's Son, or you are following the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air. Of course, people are more or less consistent; but at heart there are only two kinds of people. This being the case, it is impossible that someone should become a Christian without diminishing the forces of the adversary. Every additional Christian means a loss for Satan, just as every apostate Christian is a gain for Satan and a loss for the kingdom of God. If the kingdom grows, if vast numbers of humans are saved by the blood of Jesus, then vast numbers are being lost to the prince of darkness. It can be no other way.

Thus, if we really believe that the kingdom will grow, we must also believe that the opposition will shrink. (We must not forget, of course, certain qualifications: Men remain sinners until Christ returns; there will be unbelievers, a "mixed world," until Christ returns; our struggle with sin continues as long as we live in the flesh; and the growth of the kingdom does not appear, from our viewpoint, as a straight line, but as a series of fits and starts, ups and downs.)

Second, the Bible's use of military metaphors to describe the extension of Christ's dominion implies that there will be a loser in history. Paul says that Jesus must reign "until He has placed all His enemies at His feet" (1 Corinthians 15:25). In a sense, of course, all things are under His feet already, but clearly Paul foresees continuing warfare until Christ's enemies are completely vanquished from the field and bowing before Him. Other passages imply the image of warfare to describe the Christian life and the history of the kingdom (Eph. 6; 2 Cor. 10:3-6). Revelation 19 teaches the same truth. Some, of course, see this passage as a prophecy of the end times, but I understand this chapter as a symbolic picture of Christ triumphing over His enemies by the sword (Word) that comes out of His mouth. His army is victorious; the armies of the beast lie slain in the field, a feast for birds of prey. Christ's forces advance at the expense of Satan's armies.

Finally, the Old Testament prophecies of Christ's kingdom are full of references to His victories over His enemies. Christ rules over the kings of the earth with a rod of iron, punishing those who refuse to bow before Him (Psalm 2). Christ is seated as priest-king until His enemies are brought under His feet (Psalm 110). The stone cut without hands crushes the other kingdoms of the world (Daniel 2:44-45). Christ breaks the rod of the oppressor and liberates His people from bondage (Isaiah 9:4). He strikes the earth with the rod of His mouth (Word) and slays the wicked with the breath of His lips (Spirit) (Isaiah 11:4).

It seems clear from these considerations that Christ will extend His rule over more and more people, and that as He does so, the Kingdom of Satan will be gradually overcome.

It is important, in conclusion, to reflect on the language that the Bible uses in describing the future of the kingdom. In the parables of Jesus the kingdom is said to "grow" (cf. especially Mark 4:26-29: the seed growing "of itself"). That is, Jesus does not use architectural images — building — to describe the future of the kingdom, but organic images. I take this to be very significant. It suggests that the kingdom's growth is "natural," an unfolding of its inherent potential, rather than something that depends on the efforts and plans of men. Seeds grow, whether we want them to or not. This does not mean that men play no part in the growth of the kingdom, but that the relationship between our efforts and the growth of the kingdom is complex. Sometimes, indeed, He works more in spite of our efforts than because of them.

The military imagery is also significant. Soldiers rarely know the entire strategy of the general. Fighting

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***Babette's Feast* (French/Danish, 1987)**

One of the most fascinating films in terms of both cinematography and theme is Gabriel Axel's direction of *Babette's Feast* (1987), based on Isak Dinesen's novella. The film was a joint venture between France and Denmark, and so as you might expect, both French and Danish comprise the dialogue, though chiefly the latter. The international version released to America has English subtitles, which might put some people off, but the captions are easy to read and relatively few for a long movie. Besides, the hymnology and sacramental themes woven throughout the narrative make it worth the extra eyestrain.

The famed European actress Stephane Audran plays **Babette**, an exquisite Paris chef who has been forced into exile after the Paris revolt of 1871. She finds homage with two Christian spinster sisters, **Filippa** (named after Philip Melancthon, fellow German reformer with Martin Luther) and Martine (named after Martin Luther). Although the sisters are unable to provide any remuneration beyond simple room and board, **Babette** nevertheless volunteers as maid and cook to the sisters and gradually gains the respect and admiration of the devout but poor Christian community on the Scandinavian North Sea Coast.

Babette's arrival at the community comes during a period of dissension within their small world and after the death of the sister's godly father who served as vicar for the village. Now the sisters attempt to hold the religious community together with prayer, hymns, and homilies in their humble abode, with **Babette** serving simple cakes and refreshments after informal worship. It is interesting to note that **Babette** always takes her meals in the kitchen after serving the sisters and the remnant congregation — always assuming the role of the faithful servant — and never once complains about the staple diet of bread soup and dried cod. While the few remaining members of the congregation idly speak of being servants of the Great King, only **Babette** demonstrates the spirit of servanthood and humility, to the sister's constant dismay.

Soon the dissension within the community becomes too vocal for **Martine** and **Filippa** to suppress. In the midst of all the bickering, though, **Babette** receives some encouraging news; through a series of circumstances, a sum of 10,000 francs has been awarded to her. She proposes to use the money to cook a French "feast" for the congregation, a feast so special that she must cautiously venture back to France in order to purchase the seafood, yeasts, and wine herself. She asks the sisters permission first, and after it is granted, the sisters believe that **Babette** will use the remainder of the money to make a permanent move back to France.

When **Babette** returns to the community with wheelbarrows full of seafood (including a live turtle!), the sisters become suspicious of such extravagance, and scrutinize the contents of the feast. The congregants all agree to pretend to enjoy the meal, so as not to hurt **Babette's** feelings, but find that in the midst of feasting, all jealousies and rivalries evaporate and merriment prevails. The huge banquet, which takes many days for **Babette** to prepare, is reminiscent of our Lord's preparation of His communion table, which cost His very life to offer, and which now serves as a source of joy for the Christian.

There is a fascinating character study of how the feast serves as a means for transforming the bickering and suspicious congregants, in their state of sinful rebellion, to a state of contented grace. Their first love — that is, Christ — is restored in their hearts and they begin singing. Even Martine's "first love" who returns suddenly — a Swedish general and diplomat who forsook her love and the Christian community years before — becomes captivated for the first time with the love of Christian communion, suddenly realizing that his life has been empty and ill-spent.

In the closing scenes, the sisters discover that **Babette** has spent the entire 10,000 francs on the meal and has no desire to return to Paris, the city where she served as premier *chef de cuisine* at the *Cafe Anglais*. She is content to remain the humble servant. How much she typifies the woman Jesus encountered, who anointed the Master's feet with precious and expensive ointment which she sacrificially bought!

Suffice to say that *Babette's Feast* has many interlocking sacramental and Christian themes, including *parousia-type* themes of appearances/concealments/reappearances. Only a few of these have been touched on here.

The film has enjoyed enormous success for a subtitled motion picture and is currently touring through small movie houses. You may also be able to find it on videotape, although few stores, I suspect, will have it available for rental, as is the case with most foreign films.

Manchurian Candidate (MGM/UA 1962).
The Rosary Murders (1987)

Two films enjoy **ing renewed life in the videotape** market may be of interest to discerning Christians.

The first is John **Frankenheimer's Manchuria Can-**
didate, a 1962 film **that** has been **re-released** through
 MGM/UA to movie theaters. The film, based on Richard
 Condon's popular novel of **the** same title, stars the later
 Laurence Harvey as Raymond Shaw, a career military
 man who, together with his squadron, is brainwashed by
 the Chinese and Soviets for a secret operation in **Amer-**
ica. Shaw is the stepson of the obnoxious and bumbling
 Senator **Iselin** (who presumably is intended to mirror Joe
 McCarthy), but Angela Lansbury (of *Murder She Wrote*
 fame) as Shaw's ruthless and interfering mother is the
 real, though **perv**erted, genius.

There are some drawbacks to the film, however.
 Frank Sinatra, who receives top billing, is unable to
 capture the emotional intensity in his character that most
 of his scenes **demand**. Janet Leigh's character, **Rosie**, is
 a throwaway: She's dimensionless and adds nothing to
 the theme. The audience is also asked to suspend its
 disbelief a few too many times, particularly in regard to
 how a three-day brainwashing scenario could turn Shaw
 into an unconscionable assassin years later.

Yet, despite these gaps, the **communist-infiltration**
 theme is a strong one and the ending provides some
 surprises — and revelations — about anti-communist
 spokesmen that have some bearing today. There are
 some good camera shots also, and the film is relatively
 free of that dated, 60's dialect that plagues most films of
 the era. **Silva's** performance as Chunjin, the malevolent
 communist with a warped sense of humor, is superb.

Since the film was originally a 1962 release, there is
 no profanity and no bedroom scenes. Some of the vide-
 otape releases have a short interview with Sinatra and
 Frankenheimer at the film's end, although there is very
 little discussion about the theme of the motion picture.

A more subtle film with subdued religious themes is
 Fred Walton's *Rosary Murders*, a 1987 release that slept
 right through the box office, but is now becoming **popu-**
lar on the videotape market.

Donald Sutherland stars as Father **Koesler**, a tired
 Roman Catholic priest serving a poor parish in Detroit
 and its adjoining parochial school. **Koesler's** friend, a
 nun living in the adjacent convent, has decided to **leave**
the order and **marry** someone outside the faith, a decision
 that apparently has little effect on him. The next **day**,
 however, he **finds** her murdered body in a **bath**tub, after
 she has been **reported** missing, with a rosary clutched in
 her hand.

A series of **similar murders ensue**, with **all the**
 victims being priest and nuns, and **all** being found with
 a rosary clutched in their **palms**. This is **one of** those films
 that defies the reviewer to explain what **the film's** about
 without giving too much of the mystery away. I will
 resolve such a tension by focusing on two particularly
 dramatic scenes.

The first involves a heated exchange between Father
Koesler and Father **Nabors**, the priest in charge of the
 parish. **Nabors**, brilliantly played by Charles Duming,
 forbids **Koesler** from baptizing a child born out of
 wedlock to a parishioner. He says he will not have a
 bastard "baptized in my church." When **Koesler ques-**
tions Nabors about whose church it is, **Nabors** appears
 somewhat shaken, but immovable. It is quite an **emo-**
tional scene.

Another is the whole underlying theme in the movie:
 the dangers of **auricular** confession. The tensions in-
 curred in keeping confessions confidential sounds like
 the typical (shopworn) TV melodrama, but the *Rosary*
Murders rises above the trivial genre. It shows how
 granting pardon to the truly impenitent can have disas-
 trous consequences, and that often those who are **truly**
 repentant — such as **Koesler's** friend and newspaper
reporter, Pat Lennon — never receive the forgiveness
 they so deeply need.

A **very good** and thought-provoking film. There is
 some violence and some profanity, and the themes may
 be too intense for younger viewers.

BOOKS

Finally, Family Devotions that Work by Terry Hall.
 (Moody Press, 1986) 125 pages, \$5.95 (p). *Reviewed by*
Michael R. Gilstrap.

I love college basketball. In my opinion it is the
greatest sport to watch. And if it's Big Ten college
 basketball, that's even better. During the season, I **greed-**
ily scan the television schedule so that I can **be** sure to
 make time for the games. I **never** have a **problem** finding
 a time to watch the really top contests: North Carolina vs.
 Duke, Illinois vs. Michigan, Oklahoma vs. **Loyola-**
Marymount. I even find time [o watch **other** less impor-
 tant games. And **do** you know why I never have a
 problem? **Because** for me watching college basketball is

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Bring Geneva Ministries to YOUR Church!

Announcing the Availability of GM's Local Seminar!

Every Parent's Dream Building Faith, Character, and Success into YOUR Child's Life

conducted by
The Rev. Michael R. Gilstrap,
president of Geneva Ministries

Every parent's dream is for his or her child to be successful, but what are the proper, biblical expectations we should have for our children? That is precisely the question this seminar is designed to answer.

Every Parent's Dream is for all fathers and mothers who have sensed the breadth of *their* responsibilities and the scope of their *children's* possibilities, yet, who have not been able to work these into a practical value system which may be used on a day to day basis.

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- .The Call within a Call...
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- .communicating a vision of the future . . .
- success and a life of service...
- .the place of wealth and ways to handle money . . .
- .And much, much more!

If you believe **Every Parent's Dream** is a seminar you would like to have at your Church, please contact the Rev. Michael R. Gilstrap at (214) 592-0620 or write him at Geneva Ministries, P.O. Box 131300, Tyler, TX 75713. Don't hesitate to call or write if you have any questions!

A detailed prospectus
is available upon request

one of the most enjoyable things I do **all year**. I revel in the excitement and hoopla. I look forward to the NCAA tournament and the Final Four all year.

Although in my book college basketball ranks right up therewith other important diversions in life, there *are* some things more important. One of them is the spiritual welfare of our families, and in particular, **the** devotional life of our families. Unquestionably, if I had to make a choice between family devotions and an Indiana University basketball game, **I** would choose family devotions. But if I was asked to compare the enjoyment and excitement of a typical family devotion and the enjoyment and excitement of an IU basketball game, **there** would be no contest. **If** your house is like ours, our family devotions have been — in a word — *boring*.

That's why Terry Hall's book caught my eye. *Finally, Family Devotions that Work* is a book that really lives up to its title. Everywhere I go, and almost everyone I **talk** to, complains about their family's devotional life. The typical Christian family is inconsistent in their devotional life. It's difficult to get the entire family together (especially if you have **teenagers!**). Almost everyone is having trouble in this area.

If you're one of the crowd with difficulty, then Terry Hall's book is just what you've been looking for. It is chock full of innovative and fun activities which will enhance your family's devotional life. Included are instructions for special projects, drama, Scripture memory, Bible search games, and much more. It is divided into weeks of the year, so if you choose to do so, this book can be your road map for an entire year's worth of family devotions.

By using Hall's ideas, your children won't roll their eyes and inwardly groan when you call them to the family altar. They 'll be coming back for more! Family devotions will **be fun!** You won't have to work as hard to be consistent. Just like my college basketball games, family devotions will be anticipated with great relish. Furthermore, together you will find that your family devotions are not just devotions, but time spent together as a family doing activities that are Bible centered. And who among us doesn't need more of that?

Never Too Small for God: A Kid's Bible Study about Young Heroes by Paula Rinehart. (NavPress, 1989) 50 pages, \$3.95 (p).

One of a Kind: A Kid's Bible Study about Peter by Paula Rinehart. (NavPress, 1989) 57 pages, \$3.95 (p).

Stuck Like Glue: A Kid's Bible Study about Friends by Paula Rinehart. (NavPress, 1989) 47 pages, \$3.95 (p).

Reviewed by Michael R. Gilstrap.

This new series by NavPress is unique in Christian

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literature. These three booklets are designed for preteens (8–12 year olds) to teach them how to study the Bible on their own. The Navigators submitted this material to extensive field testing, and it proved itself successful in hundreds of instances.

Children really do learn to study the Bible on their own by using these booklets. Mrs. Rinehart, for many years a schoolteacher at the Pantego Christian Academy in Arlington, Texas, combines stories, stickers, questions, and activities to help kids get a head start in Bible study.

Never Too Small for God teaches the lesson that being a hero doesn't depend on one's age, size, or popularity. Being a hero means doing great things for God, and that depends on listening to Him. Speaking directly to the child, Mrs. Rinehart points out that it's easier at a young age to hear God because the ears aren't too old — stopped up with all the things grown-ups have to worry about!

Stuck Like Glue is a study book teaching the value of friendships and what the Bible has to say about it: making and keeping friends, what kinds of friends to avoid, what to do when your friends disappoint you, and how to become God's special friend.

And finally, *One of a Kind* explores the unique character of Peter. Children really identify with this particular Apostle because he was always getting into trouble: talking when he should have been quiet, running when he should have stayed put, and doubting when he should have been believing. But God changed Peter's life, and the message of the book is that God can change our lives too!

These pre-teen Bible study booklets are an excellent resource for imparting the eternal truths of God's word to your children. If you have any 8–12 year olds around your house, I highly recommend them.

The Gift of Time: Family Celebrations and Activities for Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany by Margaret Ehlen-Miller, the Rev. Robert Miller, Loretta VanderVeen, and Carl VanderVeen. (Morehouse-Barlow, 1977) 40 pages, oversize 8 1/2 x 11, \$4.95 (p).

Wait in Joyful Hope: Traditions, Celebrations, Activities for Advent and Christmas by Mary V. Reilly, Margaret K. Wetterer, and Nancy K. Lyons. (Morehouse-Barlow, 1980) 44 pages, oversize 8 1/2 x 11, \$4.95 (p).

A Time of Hope: Family Celebrations and Activities for Lent and Easter by Margaret Ehlen-Miller, the Rev. Robert Miller, Loretta VanderVeen, and Carl VanderVeen. (Morehouse-Barlow, 1977) 40 pages, oversize 8 1/2 x 11, \$4.95 (p).

Reviewed by Michael R. Gilstrap

These three books are similar in purpose to Terry Hall's *Finally, Family Devotions that Work* (reviewed above). They are designed to bring into focus for the Christian family the true meaning of the seasons of the year. Each book contains a unique collection of customs and activities related to the seasons, and which may be shared in by all family members, young and old alike. Along with prayers, stories, and exercises for meditation and contemplation, each of the books suggests creative projects for the whole family — projects which heighten the joy of sharing and being together as a family, thus drawing the individual members closer together.

Each season is begun with a brief definition of the season even the youngest family member can understand (i.e., Advent — arrival, a penitential season beginning four Sundays before Christmas; waiting for and preparing for the seasonal celebration of the coming of Christ at the incarnation). The authors then offer a more extended explanation which is followed by a complete selection of projects a family may select from to enhance the theme of the season.

Although Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany are past us this year, it's never too early to start thinking about and planning for next year. These three books will be valuable additions to any family's resources in the area of seasonal family celebrations.

The Great Dinosaur Adventure: An Educational Game of Creation and Bible-Knowledge. (Creation Life Publishers, 1988). \$24.95. Reviewed by Michael R. Gilstrap.

This new board game is in reality an innovative educational package. Our children love it! Designed by the Institute for Creation Research staff, *The Great Dinosaur Adventure* is a high play value learning experience for the whole family. Everyone, from pre-readers through adults, will benefit from this game.

Set in the world of Noah's day, players take their molded 3-D dinosaur playing pieces through the lands of Havilah, Assyria, Nod, and Cush on the path to Noah's Ark. Each player must pick up 7 animal pair cards by correctly answering questions based on history, science, and the Bible. At numerous places around the board, players are involved in "events" which add not only excitement, but adventure (When was the last time you unwittingly climbed up the neck of an *Ultrasaurus*?). After a day of gathering animals, the player who first gets his 7 animal cards and makes it into Noah's Ark is declared the winner. The game may also be played non-competitively if a pure educational experience is desired.

The chief goal of the package is to present concepts

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and factual information that will help each child form a solid framework in Bible knowledge and creation science. Other facets of the game teach and encourage color, number, and shape recognition, all of which takes place in an environment that is fun and entertaining as well as educational.

Each game comes complete with a canvas backed, full-color game board, 4 molded 3-D dinosaur game pieces, 56 animal pair cards, and 28 event cards. Additional dinosaur playing pieces are available from Creation Life simply by filling out a buyer's survey and returning it to them.

If you like creation science, or just want to learn more about the subject, I can think of no better (and more enjoyable) way than *The Great Dinosaur Adventure*.

Gilstrap, continued from page 2

also started a string of charitable houses that stretched across Europe. Mother Teresa has few personal possessions, but she has ministered both directly and indirectly to countless thousands. Her example has inspired literally millions.

Regardless of the calling, and regardless of the financial or material rewards involved (or lack thereof),

if one pursues any activity that meets the overall life-objective of *seeking first the Kingdom of God*, then true success is the result.

This is good news for Christian parents. By looking at success in this way, it opens up new vistas of accomplishment and potential for our children. Furthermore, it raises the question of what would happen if thousands (or millions) of Christian homes embraced this comprehensive view of preparing their **children** for their calling. What effect would it have on the world we live in? I'll frame an answer to that question next month.

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on the front lines can be confusing and disorienting, and infantrymen have been known to shoot their fellows instead of the enemy. The military imagery gives greater prominence to human effort than the organic imagery of Matthew 13, but it suggests also the complex relationship of human and divine purposes.

All of this is to say that the Bible does not speak about men "building" the kingdom, or "extending" it. The kingdom grows; the Captain of the Armies of the Lord or Hosts goes ahead, and it is He who wins our battles. We are called to be faithful soldiers, not to build the kingdom. We may sow or water, but God alone can give the increase.