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# VIEWS LETTER

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## **There's Gonna' Be a Weddin'!**

The little congregation was all a twitter! Who was that hazel-eyed, dark-haired beauty holding hands with and sitting close beside JW that Sunday morning? Who were those other three, the handsome couple and their son with the movie star good looks? In a small town, where everyone knows everyone, and some are related to most, a new person in the pew, much less four, was certainly something to initiate inquisitive whisperings!

JW (initials only) was the oldest son of Alvin Garner and Carrie Adelia (Dillie) Stamps, who were former members of the farming community and significant members of the congregation of the Church of Christ in Panhandle, Texas. It was a known fact, though the family had recently relocated to Tulia, Texas, that father, Alvin, had made certain that the half section of land, where JW was reared, would be waiting for him to rent and farm when he returned home from active duty in the United States Army. Like so many other young men of his generation, he had honorably served his country during World War II. It broke his mother's heart to leave him to farm all alone so very soon after their family's joyous reunion. Just about two miles due north of the place where the young veteran was farming, now lived the family of Lewis Bowers. Lewis and his wife, Mildred, had a son, Jimmy, who enjoyed playing guitars with "Juggie." A delightful surprise to the independent farmer was Jimmy's older and beautiful sister, Leona, who had recently graduated from White Deer High School! Playing guitars with Jimmy was the flawless justification for JW to ride his army surplus, 45 Harley- Davidson motorcycle the short distance to visit the new neighbors and enjoy the company of the lovely, young lady. Friendship led to romance followed by the prospect of commitment to a future as husband and wife.

To say that opposites attract would not overstate the convoluted match of this young couple's relationship! JW was the second born child and oldest son of eleven siblings. As a war veteran and big brother, he was quite the hero, not only among his own little brothers and sisters, but also among the plethora of local cousins of whom he was the eldest male! He was a member of a large clan of accappella harmony, gospel singing folks who, by sheer numbers, were a noisy bunch, and they enjoyed nothing more than teasing each other mercilessly! Their social as well as spiritual lives were centered on family and church activities! Leona, quiet and reserved, was reared in a loving home where the four family members were affectionately close. She occasionally attended the First Baptist Church, but this was only when she could talk her brother into taking her, as her father had not yet allowed her to learn to drive! Her parents were honest, hard-working people who taught their daughter strict morals and a strong work ethic. Leona's gentle spirit was attracted to the gregarious, good-looking fella with the large family and strong Church of Christ background. The thought of participating in church fellowship and anticipating regular church service attendance, with the love of her life, appealed to the very deepest desires of her spiritual soul! Therefore, after about a three or four month courtship, when JW announced to Leona, that he needed a wife, they agreed to be married on Sunday morning, April 27, 1947 at the Church of Christ in Panhandle, Texas. According to a reliable source, this did not set well with Leona's daddy, but her mother and brother were overjoyed for the bride and groom!

Sunday morning arrived, and the worship service began, but not without the disruptive curiosity of the teenage cousins! JW's paternal uncle, Clint Oldham, was the minister, and as soon as the last "amen" was articulated, he announced to the anticipating congregants, "Well folks, there's gonna' be a weddin'! Whoever wishes may leave the building at this time, but everyone is invited to stay!" Not a soul dared move! At the minister's summon, JW stood and walked his bride, Leona, down the aisle, hand in hand, and they were married! Mr. and Mrs. JW Stamps walked out of the church building to an enthusiastic round of congratulations from relatives and friends whom the new Mrs. Stamps was yet to meet! Among those Leona met for the first time that fateful Sunday morning, were JW's dad and mom, Alvin and Dillie, as well as his siblings, who were still living at home. (Betty, Garner, LeeAnn, Mahala, David, Earl, and Norman). The family had received a post card, hand written by JW, inviting them to the wedding! Although it was the first inkling his mother had known of her son's special relationship, she was not offended, as she was just so thankful that her son would no longer be alone on the farm!

Together, with their faith in God, and His promises at the very core of their shared values and beliefs, this was the beginning of a love affair that has weathered the tumultuous storms of a committed, married life. With thankful hearts and humble gratitude, the couple has also celebrated the innumerable blessings God has endowed. Via God's mercy and grace, for a remarkable sixty-five years, JW and Leona have walked life's journey, side by side, hand in hand! To this union were born three children, Gaylon, Ann, and Adelia. As these children grew and married, the couple gained three adult children, Pat, Gary, and Clyde. Subsequently, Wayne, Wesley, Reese, Kurt J, James Jay, Kendra, Kary, Angela, Jess, Zachary, Carissa, and Ellee, twelve grandchildren, listed in birth order, were the next generation to expand the ever growing family. Ten of these grandchildren are now married, which in turn, birthed a precious generation of great grand babies. The family tree is now laden with the addition of thirty-three great grandchildren, and, so far, one more expected in June of 2012! JW and Leona continue to dwell in Panhandle, Texas. Though no longer on the farm, the "kids," "grands," and "greats," whom they dearly love, flow a placid stream in and out of the couple's residence, where they have lived life, at the corner of 7<sup>th</sup> and Franklin Street, for over fifty years. An especially sweet observation is the likelihood that on any given Sunday morning, if you look closely, you can expect to see that JW and Leona are even now holding hands as they sit in their pew, worshiping together with family and friends at the Panhandle Church of Christ!

Written By: Ann Beddingfield in honor of her parent's Sixty-fifth Wedding Anniversary, 4-27-2012.

*JW was a mentor to me in my aviation career and is still a mentor to me by example in how to behave as a good man. Both Leona and JW have always walked the walk of loving others. ~A.W. Doudney*

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**We pursue God because, and only  
because, He placed an urge within us to  
pursue Him.**

*~A.W. Tozer*

# Religious Boredom

That there is something gravely wrong with evangelical Christianity today is not likely to be denied by any serious minded person acquainted with the facts. Just what is wrong is not easy to determine.

In examining the situation myself I find nature and reason in conflict within me, for I tend by temperament to want to settle everything with a sweep of the pen. But reason advises caution; nothing is that simple, and we must be careful to distinguish cause from effect. As every doctor knows there is a wide difference between the disease and the symptoms; and every Christian knows that there is a big difference between cause and effect in the sphere of religion.

At the root of our spiritual trouble lie a number of causes and these causes have effects, but which is cause and which is effect is not always known. I suspect that many things currently under attack by our evangelists and pastors (and editors, for that matter) are not the causes of our troubles but the effects of causes that lie deeper. We treat the symptoms and wonder why the patient does not get well. Or, to change the figure, we lay down a heavy fire against nothing more substantial than the cloud of dust raised by marching enemy troops long gone by.

One mark of the low state of affairs among us is religious boredom. Whether this is a thing in itself or merely a symptom of the thing, I do not know for sure, though I suspect that it is the latter. And, that it is found to some degree almost everywhere among Christians is too evident to be denied.

Boredom is, of course, a state of mind resulting from trying to maintain an interest in something that holds no trace of interest for us (the boss's jokes, say, or that lecture on the care and nurture of dahlias to which we went because we could not resist the enthusiastic urging of a friend). No one is bored by what he can in good conscience walk away from. Boredom comes when a man must try to hear with relish what for want of relish he hardly hears at all.

By this definition, there is certainly much boredom in religion these days. The businessman on a Sunday morning whose mind is on golf can scarcely disguise his lack of interest in the sermon he is compelled to hear. The housewife who is unacquainted with the learned theological or philosophical jargon of the speaker; the young couple who feel a tingle of love for each other but who neither love nor know the One about whom the choir is singing-these cannot escape the low-grade mental pain we call boredom while they struggle to keep their attention focused upon the service. All these are too courteous to admit to others that they are bored and possibly too timid to admit it even to themselves, but I believe that a bit of candid confession would do us all good.

When Moses tarried in the mount, Israel became bored with the faith that sees the invisible and clamored for a god they could see and touch. And they displayed a great deal more enthusiasm for the golden calf than they did over the Lord God of Abraham. Later they tired of manna and complained against the monotony of their diet. On their petulant insistence they finally got flesh to eat, and that to their own undoing.

Those Christians who belong to the evangelical wing of the church (which I firmly believe is the only one that even approximates New Testament Christianity) have over the last half-century shown an increasing impatience with things invisible and eternal and have demanded and got a host of things visible and temporal to satisfy their fleshly appetites. Without Biblical authority, or any other right under the sun, carnal religious leaders have introduced a host of attractions that serve no purpose except to provide entertainment for the retarded saints.

It is now common practice in most evangelical churches to offer the people, especially the young people, a maximum of entertainment and a minimum of serious instruction. It is scarcely possible in most places to get anyone to attend a meeting where the only attraction is God. One can only conclude that God's professed children are bored with Him, for they must be wooed to meeting with a stick of striped candy in the form of religious movies, games and refreshments.

This has influenced the whole pattern of church life, and even brought into being a new type of church architecture, designed to house the golden calf.

So, we have the strange anomaly of orthodoxy in creed and heterodoxy in practice. The striped-candy technique has been so fully integrated into our present religious thinking that it is simply taken for granted. Its victims never dream that it is not a part of the teachings of Christ and His apostles.

Any objection to the carryings on of our present golden-calf Christianity is met with the triumphant reply, "But we are winning them!" And winning them to what? To true discipleship? To cross-carrying? To self-denial? To separation from the world? To crucifixion of the flesh? To holy living? To nobility of character? To a despising of the world's treasures? To hard self-discipline? To love for God? To total committal to Christ? Of course the answer to all these questions is no.

We are paying a frightful price for our religious boredom. And that at the moment of the world's mortal peril.

~A.W. Tozer, from his book, "Man: The Dwelling Place of God"

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**Come, I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute who is seated on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth have committed sexual immorality, and the wine of whose sexual immorality the dwellers on earth have become drunk.**

~Spoken to John the Revelator by one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls. *Revelation 17:1-2 ESV*

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## **The Beginning of Public Education**

The movement for universal education began in New England. Clear back in 1647 the legislature of Massachusetts passed a law requiring every community of fifty families or householders to set up a free public grammar school to teach the fundamentals of reading, writing, ciphering, history, geography and Bible study. In addition, every township containing 100 families or more was required to set up a secondary school in advance studies to prepare boys for attendance at Harvard. John Adams stated that this whole program was designed to have "knowledge diffused generally through the whole body of the people." He said:

"They made an early provision by law that every town consisting of so many families should be always furnished with a grammar school. They made it a crime for such a town to be destitute of a grammar schoolmaster for a few months, and subjected it to heavy penalty. So that the education of all ranks of people was made the care and expense of the public, in a manner that I believe has been unknown to any other people, ancient or modern."

"The consequences of these establishments we see and feel every day [written in 1765]. A native of America who cannot read and write is as rare—as a comet or an earthquake. It has been observed that we are all of us lawyers, divines, politicians, and philosophers. And, I have good authorities to say that all candid foreigners who have passed through this country and conversed freely with all sorts of people here will allow that they have never seen so much knowledge and civility among the common people in any part of the world—liberty cannot be preserved without a general knowledge among the people—They have a right, an indisputable, unalienable, inde-feasible, divine right to that most

dreaded and envied kind of knowledge I mean, of the characters and conduct of their rulers." (Koch, *The American Enlightenment*. p. 239.)

### **Importance of Good Local School Boards**

The success of this educational effort was due largely to careful selection of highly conscientious people to serve on the school committees in each community and supervise the public schools. Historian John Fiske says these school committees were bodies of "great importance." Then he adds:

"The term of service of the members is three years, one third being chosen annually. The number of members must, therefore, be some multiple of three. The slow change in the membership of the board insures that a large proportion of the members shall always be familiar with the duties of the place. The school committee must visit all the public schools at least once a month, and make a report to the town every year. It is for them to decide what text-books are to be used. They examine candidates for the position of teacher and issue certificates to those whom they select."(Fiske, *Civil Government in the United States*, Houghton, Mifflin and Company, Boston, 1890], pp 22-23)

### **European and American Literacy Compared**

The unique and remarkable qualities of this program are better appreciated when it is realized that this was an age when illiteracy was the common lot of most people in Europe. John Adams, who spent many years in France, commented on the fact that of the 24 million inhabitants of France, only 500,000 could read and write. (Koch, *The American Enlightenment*, pp. 213, 217.)

In the American colonies the intention was to have all children taught the fundamentals of reading, writing and arithmetic so that they could go on to become well-informed citizens through their own diligent self-study. No doubt this explains why all of the American Founders were so well read, and usually from the same books even though a number of them had received a very limited formal education. The fundamentals were sufficient to get them started, and thereafter they became remarkably well informed in a variety of areas through self-learning. This was the pattern followed by both Franklin and Washington.

### **De Tocqueville Comments on American Education in 1831**

Gradually, the zeal for universal education spread from New England to all of the other colonies. By 1831, when Alexis de Tocqueville of France visited the United States, he was amazed by the fruits of this effort. He wrote:

"The observer who is desirous of forming an opinion on the state of instruction among the Anglo-American must consider the same object from two different points of view. If he singles out only the learned, he will be astonished to find how few they are; but if he counts the ignorant, the American people will appear to be the most enlightened in the world."

"In New England every citizen receives the elementary notions of human knowledge; he is taught, moreover, the doctrines and the evidences of his religion, the history of his country, and the leading features of its' Constitution. In the states of Connecticut and Massachusetts, it is extremely rare to find a man imperfectly acquainted with all these things, and a person wholly ignorant of them is a sort of phenomenon." (Alex de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*. 1:326-327.)

### **Excursions in the Wilderness**

De Tocqueville pointed out that as the visitor advanced toward the West or the South, "the instruction of the people diminishes." Nevertheless, he said, "there is not a single district in the United States sunk in complete ignorance.." (Ibid., 1:327.) De Tocqueville made extensive excursions along the frontier and commented on his observations as follows:

"At the extreme borders of the confederated states, upon the confines of society and wilderness, a population of bold adventures have taken up their abode, who pierce the solitudes of the American woods... As soon as the pioneer reaches the place which is to serve him for a retreat, he fells a few trees and builds a log house. Nothing can offer a more miserable aspect than these isolated dwellings.... Yet, no sort of comparison can be drawn between the pioneer and the dwelling that shelters him. Everything about him is primitive and wild, but he is himself the result of the labor and experience of eighteen centuries. He wears the dress and speaks the language of cities; he is acquainted with the past, curious about the future and ready for argument about the present; he is, in short, a highly civilized being who consents for a time to inhabit the backwoods, and who penetrates into the wilds of the New World with the Bible, an axe and some newspapers. It is difficult to imagine the incredible rapidity with which thought circulates in the midst of these deserts [wilderness]. I do not think that so much intellectual activity exist in the most enlightened and populous districts of France." (Ibid, 1:328-29.)

### **Education Includes Morality and Politics**

He then went on to comment concerning the close relationship between the program of universal education and the preservation of freedom:

"It cannot be doubted that in the United States the instruction of the people powerfully contributes to the support of the democratic republic; and such must always be the case, I believe, where the instruction which enlightens the understanding is not separated from the moral education... An American should never be led to speak of Europe for he will then probably display much presumption and very foolish pride.... But if you question him respecting his own country, the cloud that dimmed his intelligence will immediately disperse; his language will become as clear and precise as his thoughts. He will inform you what his rights are by what means he exercises them; he will be able to point out the customs which [were] obtained in the political world. You will find that he is well acquainted with the rules of the administration, and that he is familiar with the mechanism of the laws.... The American learns to know the laws by participating in the act of legislation, and he takes a lesson in the form of government from governing. The great work of society is ever going on before his eyes and, as it were, under his hands.

"In the United States, politics are the end and aim of education..." (Ibid.,1: 329-30)

### **Even Young Children [are] Trained in the Constitution**

To appreciate the literal reality of the emphasis on politics in early American education, one need only examine the popular textbook on political instruction for children. It was called a "Catechism on the Constitution," and it contained both questions and answers concerning the principles of the American political system. It was written by Arthur J. Stansbury and published in 1828.

Early Americans knew they were in possession of a unique and valuable invention of political science, and they were determined to promote it on all levels of education.

### **Early Americans Educated to Speak with Eloquence**

In 1843, Daniel Webster made a statement which might surprise Americans of our own day:

"And whatever may be said to the contrary, a correct use of the English language is, at this day [1843], more general throughout the United States than it is throughout England herself." (The Works of Daniel Webster, 6 vols., Little Brown and Company, Boston, 1851, 1:1025.)

It was commonplace for the many people on the frontier, as well as the Atlantic seaboard, to speak with genuine flavor of eloquence. Sermons and orations by men of limited formal education reflected a flourish and style of expression which few Americans could duplicate today. Many of these

attributed their abilities to extensive reading of the Bible. Such was the case with Abraham Lincoln. Certainly, the classical beauty of the Gettysburg Address and many other famous expressions cannot be attributed to college training for he had none.

### **Cultural Influence of Extensive Bible Reading**

Not only did the Bible contribute to the linguistic habits of the people, but it provided root strength to their moral standards and behavioral patterns. As Daniel Webster stated, wherever Americans went, "the Bible came with them." Then he added:

"It is not to be doubted, that to the free and universal reading of the Bible, in that age, men were much indebted for right views of civil liberty. The Bible is a book of faith and a book of doctrine and a book of morals, and a book of religion, of especial revelations from God; but it is also a book which teaches man his own dignity, and his equality with his fellow man." (Ibid.)

In our own day, the public schools have been secularized to the point where no Bible reading is permitted. The founding Fathers would have counted this a serious mistake.

*~W. Cleon Skousen, excerpt from his book; "The 5000 Year Leap: A Miracle that Changed the World" Are Americans like the frog in the boiling pot? Is it too late to jump out? I hope not! ~Comment by Adverse Yaw.*

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## **Good Things Falling into Evil Company**

**The doctrine of justification by faith—a Biblical truth, and a blessed relief from sterile legalism and unavailing self-effort—has in our time fallen into evil company and been interpreted by many in such manner as actually to bar men from the knowledge of God. The whole transaction of religious conversion has been made mechanical and spiritless. Faith may now be exercised without a jar to the moral life and without embarrassment to the Adamic ego. Christ may be "received" without creating any special love for Him in the soul of the receiver. The man is "saved," but he is not hungry or thirsty after God. In fact he is specifically taught to be satisfied and encouraged to be content with little.**

*~A. W. Tozer, an excerpt from his book The Pursuit of God.*

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# God Must Be Loved for Himself

God being who He is must always be sought for Himself, never as a means toward something else. Whoever seeks other objects and not God is on his own; he may obtain those objects if he is able, but he will never have God. God is never found accidentally. "Ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart: (Jer. 29:13).

Whoever seeks God as a means toward desired ends will not find God. The mighty God, the maker of heaven and earth, will not be one of many treasures, not even the chief of all treasures. He will be all in all or He will be nothing. God will not be used. His mercy and grace are infinite and His patient understanding is beyond measure, but He will not aid men in their selfish striving after personal gain. He will not help men to attain ends which, when attained, usurp the place He by every right should hold in their interest and affection.

*Transcribed from: God - The Dwelling Place of Man ~by A.W. Tozer*

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## Around the House

*By Barkley Doudney Schnauzer Dog*

I was reading the other day and came across a poem by ~Jean W. Sawtell.

As I read it, I became very emotional. The poem brought a tear to my eye and caused me to slobber more than Pavlov's Dog ever did. I know this for sure; the dog who inspired this poem was not too much unlike myself. It's sometimes lonely being a dog.

### IT'S A TOUGH ON A DOG

*By Jean W. Sawtell*

It's tough on a dog when his boy grows up.  
When he no longer romps and frolics like a pup.

It's tough on a dog when his boy gets old,  
When they no longer cuddle on his bed when it's cold.

It's tough on a dog when his boy gets tall,  
When he's off with the boys playing soccer and baseball.

They no longer paddle through the mud in the bog.  
Hoping to find a stray turtle or frog.

They no longer run through the grass up to their knees,  
Or roll in the piles of fresh fallen leaves.

It's tough on a dog when his boy gets tall,  
When's he's off to school, looking at girls in the hall.

It's tough on a dog when he has work to do,  
When he forgets to play as he used to.

It's tough on a dog when instead of the woods or field or pond,  
His boy becomes a man — and the man is gone.

I hope you enjoy the poem as much as I do, it still makes me a little melancholy when I read it.

Things around here haven't changed since last time I wrote. I am still up to my ears in dealing with the Frenchman dog, Jock. You remember him, I've mentioned him before, he's the Miniature Poodle, you know, the dog that can't hunt or don't or won't hunt. I don't know if it is because he is getting old and doesn't care or if he just never gave hunting any serious thought. I know this, he thinks he is a tough, mean, fighting machine until the Boss comes in, then he promptly tucks his tail between his legs and finds him a hiding place. He made



the mistake of snapping at the Bosses bare foot, I don't think it worked out very well for the Frenchman. For some, reason his attitude now changes when Boss comes around, it has something to do with pecking order and such. The Boss is mostly mild mannered, but doesn't tolerate rudeness' in a dog.

Linda is the same, she has an occasional coughing spell, but after that she is pretty much normal. I know this about her, when it comes to her grandchildren and her dogs she is a woman to be feared. She really cares about Jock and I and especially her four grandchildren.

I barked at the Boss last time he came into the house because he has lost so much weight I didn't recognize him. He says he feels twenty years younger after losing more than fifty pounds. He wishes he had gone on this diet thirty years ago. I have to admit he looks and acts like a much younger man.

He is now trying to get Linda to do the same diet, however, she doesn't think she needs to lose any weight. The Boss told her to get naked and take a long look at herself in the mirror. He said that if that doesn't change her mind nothing will.

The Boss is often at the farm for two, sometimes three weeks at a time. He says that it's lonely down there since all the cattle have been sold. The horses, donkeys and mule don't come around much as there is plenty of sweet Bermuda grass to eat.

The last of the Bosses Aunts has passed on to heaven. Carol Jean Flippo Maple was a good aunt for the Boss. She would come out and help him load calves when he took them to the Sale Barn. He said they would always stop at a café in Paris and have breakfast afterward. I can tell from knowing him, he already misses her.

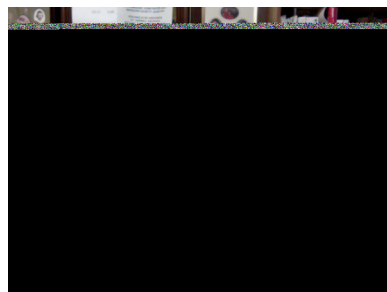
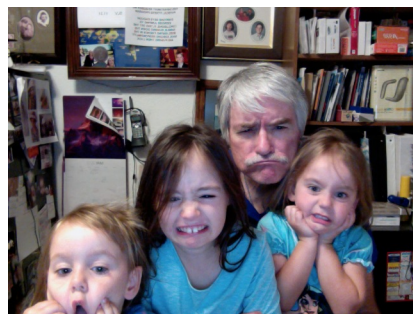
The Boss and some of his cousins had a get together after the Graveside service at the Boss's Farmhouse. He said that there, was at least forty plus friends and relatives there, and it went off pretty well.

Later that same Saturday, Andy and his family came by. The little girls had a ball on the swing that was hung high in a tree and swings out from the porch over the yard twenty-five or thirty yards.

The little girls fed the horses some cookies which they ate with much celebration. Now, the horses have started coming around all the time begging for a cookie. Of course to the chagrin of the horses, there are no more cookies, but the Boss gives them a loving rub and pat on their back side. That's all I have this time.

Best Regards,

*Bark*



**Sleep Over at Papa Wayne's & messing around with Photo Booth!**

**That's All Folks!**