

THE YALE STANDARD

Volume XIII, No. 1

When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. Isaiah 59:19

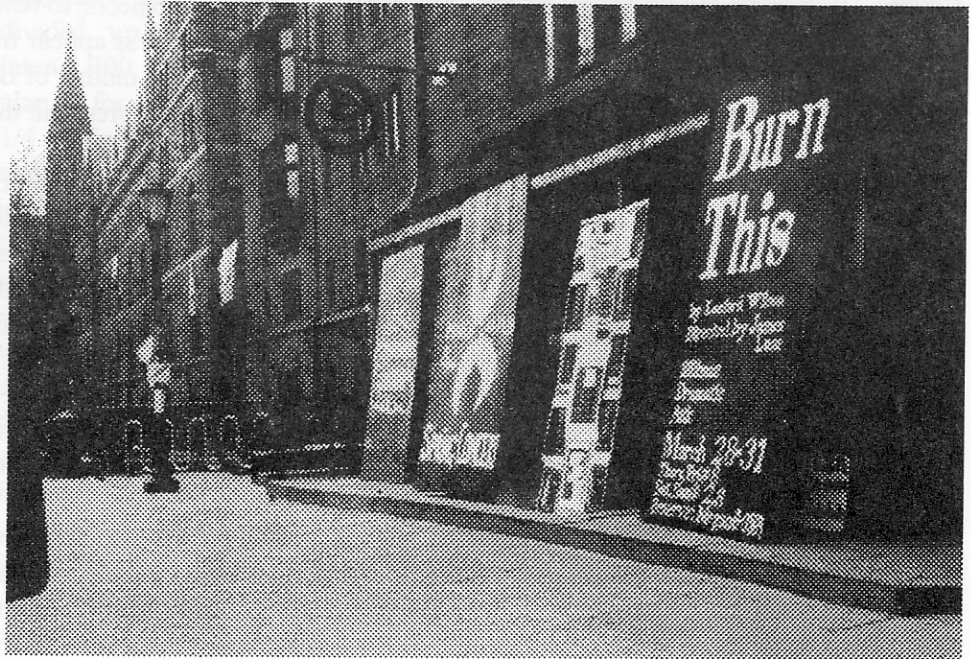
Spring 1996

Living For Applause?

At Yale, I lived a lot on the surface of things. I suppose I had a good excuse. I was on the stage a lot. In one small stage production, I had the leading role. The producers advertised the play by plastering a dramatic black and white photo of me on posters everywhere. I couldn't walk down a single street in central New Haven without seeing my image hanging from a lamppost.

No big surprise, then, that I poured most of my energy into appearances and what others thought of me. I sang in one of Yale's a capella singing groups. The sad thing is that now, an alumnus far from jamborees and solos, I am a far better singer.

Why? Nowadays I listen to the quality of sound coming out of my mouth, and I can do something about it.



Back then, I was caught up in what the pitchpipe thought of me, or whether I could fill the role of our group's funniest, most creative guy—you know, the one who gets the audience to nod and smile when he introduces a song.

It would have been nice to add

here, "and then I became a Christian and everything got better." I have to confess that I was a Christian. I was up to my ears in campus Christian groups, and those ears were always tingling to know my status. Did people perceive me as a

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Bill Borden: Challenge to a Consecrated Life

He was only 25 at his death, yet his life was one of great impact. When news of his death was cabled from Egypt, the Princeton Seminary Bulletin declared, "No young man of his age has ever given more to the service of God and humanity!"

A prominent Yale professor stated, "No undergraduate, since I have been connected with Yale, has done so much for Christ in four short years than he did" (H.W. Wright). His name was William Borden and his story affords a stirring illustration of a life totally consecrated to Christ.

would most like to be when they grew up. William wrote, in less than perfect orthography:

"I what to be an oneast man when I grow up, and true and loveing and kind and faithful man"

To his last day, by the grace of God, the man could have looked into the eyes of the child without shame!

It was as a child of seven that the lad heard R.A. Torrey give a challenge to dedicate one's life to serve God. At

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His consecration began early. Borden had the blessing of growing up in a godly home, where family prayer and Bible reading were staples. Once, when William was only six, his mother had the children write on a piece of paper what they

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CONFIDENTIAL
IDENT VOLUNTEER MOVEMENT FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS
122 East 27th Street, New York
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SAILED
DECEASED
William Borden
11/48
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11/48

The Yale
Standard
Bible Study
1996

Bible Studies:
Wednesday in
Branford Chapel at
7 PM

Saturday in
WLH 209 at 7 PM

Prayer: Weekdays
in Branford Chapel
at 8 AM

Branford Chapel is at
the base of Harkness
Tower.

Come join us
as we gather to
worship the
Lord!

Published by the Yale
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Group

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Editorial:

In March, news of the gunning down of 15 school children and their teacher in Scotland prompted someone to remark, "This is a crazy world." No kidding! Events of this senselessness appear frequently in the news: We heard of the frustration that drove the mother of Elisa Izquierdo to abuse and kill her child, the jealousy of a fan club president that led her to murder her own idol, Selena, the Latina singing star.

What compels people to commit such acts?

We might think that those people are "out there," or that the craziness is "out there." But God says that the same craziness contaminates all people. Regardless of background or circumstance, it exists; it's what He calls sin.

The way sin appears on the surface and its degree of expression differ, but the danger and the responsibility that accompany it are the same. Is the jealousy that consumed the fan club president different from the jealousy we might feel towards someone who is more successful than us? Or is the frustration of Elisa's mother any different from our own attitude when we wish someone would "just go away?"

However apparent or unapparent, with all sin comes destruction, inside and out. Inside, it brews a potent combination of guilt, shame, restlessness, and sorrow. Outside, it seeds interpersonal tension, social polarity, and finally worldwide disputes or wars.

Is there an end in sight for our plague of craziness? Must it just be inherited by and taught to next generations? Is there an anecdote, any hope at all?

Of His choice, Jesus Christ came. Jesus didn't come for himself, he came for us. The benefit is all ours and He doesn't ask for a payment in return.

"While we were still sinners, Christ died for us..." (Romans 5).

We are hopeless and cannot reform ourselves, but God provided for an early end to our sinful nature. And those cleansed from the plague would then live anew—a new heart, a new consciousness—the originally intended "man in God's image."

Jesus died on the cross bearing our sin, rose to life because sin and death could not keep him down. He reigns in Heaven today, and will return to reign on Earth.

And now He invites us who are without hope to drink. Extend your cup to where the water is flowing out. Ask God how you may follow Him. Read the Bible—his powerful message—as if He wants so much to speak to you. He will not refuse anyone who comes to Him.

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Cover Borden image taken from the Borden papers, Misc. Personal Papers Coll. MS Grp. No. 30 Box 20, Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Lib.

Borden

(Continued from page 1)

the invitation, William quietly rose (in his blue sailor suit)—and went forward. It was a consecration from which he never drew back.

After graduating from the Hill school, Borden went to Yale. Arriving, he wrote into the fly-leaf of his pocket testament, "Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against Thee" (Psalm 119). But though he resolved to hide the Word in his heart he also



William Whiting Borden, Class of 1909

resolved *not* to hide it from his classmates.

During his first term as a freshman Borden searched out and gathered up Christian classmates for daily prayer. Charlie Campbell—the first to join him—later recalled: "These meetings were held in Bill's room just before we went to breakfast.... The time was spent in prayer after a brief reading of Scripture. Our object was to pray for the religious work of the class and college and also for those of our friends we were seeking to bring to Christ."

By the end of the year, this daily class prayer meeting had spread to each class! It had *not* passed down from the seniors; it had come up from the freshmen. And blessing was given in answer to those prayers, for the little band rejoiced to see several companions soundly saved.

Borden was concerned that no one fall through the cracks. At the beginning of sophomore year, he wrote home to his Mother of his strategy: "Charlie, Jeff and I got together today and divided up the class [about 300 men]. The plan is for each to have 1/4 of class as his parish and to *know* every individual man. It will take time; but we believe it will pay."

Naturally, some were tougher prospects than others—the dancers and dicers; womanizers and whiskey drinkers. One of Borden's companions involved in the divvying up later described: "The names were gone over one by one and the question asked, 'Who will take this person or that?' When it came to one who was a hard proposition there would be an ominous pause. Nobody wanted the responsibility. Then Bill's voice would be heard: 'Put him down to me!'"

"Bill hunts up the worst skunk in College and goes after him," said a sailing friend—probably no mean judge of skunks.

It was in chasing down "skunks" that Bill became aware of another mission field. New Haven, as a seaport midway between New York and Boston seemed to gather every sordid sort of riff-raff and vagrant, tramp and hobo. Saloons, gambling halls, and brothels sprang up in abundance to accommodate the burgeoning vice. Not one rescue mission existed to bring relief and the Gospel to the down and out.

Borden felt something needed to be done so he gathered his friends to pray, rented a room in a dive on the strip, and began to hold evangelistic meetings. Thus was born the Yale Hope Mission.

As the work grew, Bill, unostentatiously

New Haven

NEW

W. W. BORDEN DEAD

HOTEL BILL CAUSE

Yale Hope Mission Founder Succumbs in Egypt

Excise Comm'

CHICAGO DAILY

W. W. BORDEN DIES IN MISSION FIELD

Career of Young Lake St Drive Millionaire Closes Short in Egypt

HE WAS WORTH A MI

Stricken with Meningitis Caring for a Fellow Worker.

William Whiting Borden, Millionaire who left Chicago boasting that he intended hardships of a missionary hammodans in China, died at Cairo, Egypt, from meningitis contracted while missionary.

Mrs. Douglas Turn was with the young man when he died. Her husband among the soldiers and in

wealthy, bought the entire building for a half way house. Many a shattered life was reclaimed for Christ in that place. One of Bill's first

"reclamations" later reminisced:

"Not till the books of heaven are opened will you know what Bill Borden done by opening Yale Hope Mission.... He'd hasten through his address and get to work with the men. As soon as the invitation was given to come forward he would be off the

(Continued on next page)



A Yale doorway near Crown and York Streets, previously to the Yale Hope Mission.

Borden

(Continued from previous page)

platform and right down among the men.... He had a habit of putting his hand on man's shoulder and they'd almost always break down when he spoke to them. I never knew a feller just like Bill. I'd like to get hold of one of his pictures. Seems to me if I saw one I'd 'most try to steal it. He could talk to anyone; didn't matter who they was. And he'd get down with his arms round the poor burly bum and hug him up. Never knowed his like in this world. I know he must have done for hundreds, just what he done for me."

A classmate observed of Borden: "He is a missionary, first, last and all the time." It was true. There was nothing spasmodic about Borden's zeal. It was as even as falling rain. A passion for souls seemed never absent from his mind. He appraised his material possessions and natural endowments not by a standard of self-indulgence or worldly ambition but by their adaptability for building the Kingdom of God—and scarcely a moment of his life was lost to that great end.

The issue for Borden was simply one of obedience. "There must be a definite determination to do God's will," he once urged a gathering of students. "Do you lack power? Ask yourself, 'Have I ever truly surrendered? Have I definitely consecrated myself? Put myself at God's disposal, to use as He deems best?'" And then he explained that consecration must have its unceasing issue:

"Obedience, which is the price of power, must not only be absolute but *daily*. Are we paying *this* part of the price?"

For Borden, surrendering to God's prompting in his own life meant preparation for the foreign field. While a freshman at Yale, he had attended a conference at which Samuel Zwemer had voiced an appeal for the Muslim world. He spoke of 15 million Muslims in China where not one single missionary was set apart for their evangelization. "Of course it will cost life," concluded Zwemer, "It is not an expedition of ease nor a picnic excursion to which we are called. It is going to cost many a life. Leadership in this Movement has always been leadership in suffering."

Borden returned to Yale committed in his heart to that great enterprise to build where none had yet laid a foundation: among the Muslims of China. Zwemer's words were true in Borden's case. His going *did* cost him his life. He never reached the Muslims in China.

While ministering in Egypt, en route to his final goal, he contracted cerebral meningitis. His mother boarded a ship to reach him but arrived only hours too late, in time only to be

Stir Up Your Gift

*We grow by expression.
When I first started out to be a Christian I couldn't stand up in a prayer meeting and use three sentences consecutively, but I made it a rule to speak whenever I got a chance and so I overcame my natural diffidence. God blesses me because I am determined to do something for Him. I could have sat still and withered and mildewed like a lot of you.*

—The Rev. W.A. (Billy) Sunday

present at the small missionary gathering at the graveside. Samuel Zwemer was among them and fittingly read from *Pilgrim's Progress* of the death of Valiant for Truth:

"My sword I give to him, that shall succeed me in my pilgrimage and my courage and my strength to him that can get it. My marks and scars I carry with me, to be a witness for me, that I have fought His battles who will now be my Rewarder.... So, he passed over, and all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side."

Far away in Kashmir news of Borden's death reached a young missionary, Sherwood Day—one of his old friends and fellow students at Yale. He entered these words in his journal:

"I have absolutely no feeling of a life cut short. A life abandoned to Christ cannot be cut short. 'Cut short' means not complete, interrupted and we know that our Master does no half-way jobs. We must pray now, that those, to whom God wants this to appeal, may listen."

Jon Hinkson

Of Silk and DNA Strands

At the publishing company where I work, we get a journal called *Science News*. Each week, I look forward to reading this pithy summary of the latest scientific findings. An article in the latest issue (March 9, 1996) talked about the strength of silk, like that spun by spiders or silk worms.

It told of a physician in the Wild West who documented cases of people who had survived bullet wounds because a silk handkerchief tied about the neck or stuffed into the breast pocket had prevented a bullet from penetrating vital arteries. The article then described how scientists were trying to emulate the natural structure of silk in order to create a comparable synthetic fiber. One of its uses could be to make stronger bulletproof vests. (Currently, they are made out of the strongest synthetic fiber, Kevlar.)

Ounce for ounce, silk is stronger than steel, yet lighter than cotton and finer than human hair. Nature or evolution, scientists say, has wrought a substance so suitably adapted for its work.

I enjoy reading scientists' accounts of their observations about the natural world, whether they believe in God or not, because they reinforce my belief that the beauty and wonders of nature are due to Him. When scientists refer to Nature what are they referring to--simply a process, or a higher being with purposeful intent?

Albert Einstein once said, "Everyone who is

Silk... had prevented a bullet from penetrating vital arteries.

seriously interested in the pursuit of science becomes convinced that a spirit is manifest in the laws of the Universe--a spirit vastly superior to that of man and one in the face of which we with our modest powers must feel humble."

A close look at a DNA molecule reveals a design elegantly and singularly suited to its function--the precise stereochemical fit of the base pairs, and the elegant spiral backbone that unzips for replication.

James Watson remarked in 1993, 40 years after their discovery of DNA's double helical structure, "The molecule is so beautiful. Its glory was reflected on Francis [Crick] and me. I guess the rest of my life has been spent trying to

prove that I was almost equal to being associated with DNA, which has been a hard task."

Earlier, Crick had written, "...But what I think is overlooked... is the intrinsic beauty of the DNA double helix. It is the molecule which has style, quite as much as scientists..." Their references to the beauty and glory of the DNA molecule resonates with the Biblical proclamation that all of God's works declare His glory

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Christian Fellowship Groups: All are welcome

Baptist Student Union (BSU)
Wednesday, 9 PM,
Dwight Hall Library

Campus Crusade for Christ (CCC)
Thursday, 7 PM,
Dwight Hall Common Room

Yale Christian Fellowship (YCF)
Friday, 7 PM,
Street Hall Room 261

Yale Gospel Choir
Wednesday, 7 PM,
Dwight Hall Library

Yale Standard Bible Study
Wednesdays 7 PM,
Branford Chapel
Saturdays 7 PM,
WLH Room 209



The heavens declare the glory of God;
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.
Day after day they pour forth speech;
night after night they display knowledge.
There is no speech or language
where their voice is not heard.
Their voice goes out into all the earth,
their words to the ends of the world.

Psalm 19

"This most beautiful system of the sun, planets, and comets could only proceed from the counsel and domain of an intelligent and powerful Being."
—Sir Isaac Newton

"For it is precisely the universe which is that Book of Nature in which God the Creator has revealed and depicted His essence and what He wills with man, in a wordless script."
—Johannes Kepler

Silk and DNA

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After reading many biology textbooks, I realize many professors teach that science and God are incompatible—science works in the realm of observable, material facts; God is immaterial. But science—the discipline of making observations about the natural world and discovering or describing the laws that govern the working of the natural world—does not have to be incompatible with God at all. Scientists such as Johannes Kepler, Michael Faraday, and Alexander Fleming viewed the study of the natural world as a study of God's material creation. They thought it a privilege to discover and understand, as much as God enabled, how and why the natural world is the way it is, and works the way it works.

Which scientist will say that we can know everything? The happiest scientists seem to be those who find a humble delight in what they study—you might even say who are "tickled" by their studies. A childlike appreciation often surfaces within us, like that which welled up in Watson and Crick, when we make new discoveries about the natural world. But God intended that we would not just marvel at the natural world about us, but with that wonder and delight, celebrate the glory of the Creator.

"For since the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse" (Romans 2).

Yuna Lee, Saybrook '94

Living For Applause?

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spiritual leader, allied with the right faction of cool Christians?

If you are at all sensitive to campus life, you know the university always tempts you to live on the surface. If I or other Christians have disappointed you by so often failing to be different, you may find two of Scripture's harder stories to be bracing refreshment.

Saul, son of Kish, was the tallest and probably handsomest man in Israel. No wonder the Lord singled him out to be Israel's first king. He met all of the qualifications. Even before he completely established his throne, Saul proved himself a fighter and a leader. 1 Samuel 9 sums him up: "an impressive young man without equal among the Israelites—a head taller than any of the others."

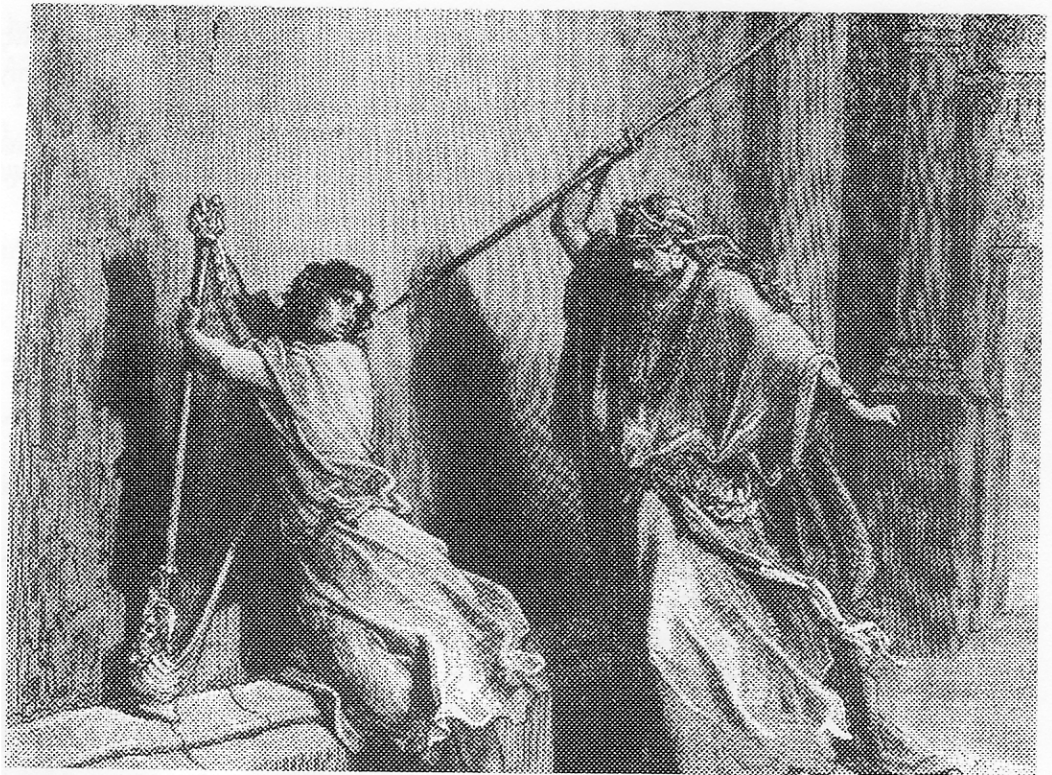
(How much energy I spilled, bidding for that label, "impressive!")

Now up until Saul's reign, the Israelites had depended more on God than on government. Their leaders, people like Samuel and Deborah, had led and judged Israel as a service to God. No palace, no dynasty. No pomp, very little show.

How much energy I spilled, bidding for that label "impressive!"

When the Israelites tired of this and demanded a king, they were gripped by surface worries. They wanted to look good: "Now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have" (1 Samuel 8). In other words, we've looked around, seen what other people do, and we want to compete, or at least conform.

A curious incident marked Saul's coronation. Samuel, entrusted to choose the new king, presented Saul at a vast citizens' assembly. Samuel had previ-



Saul, in a jealous rage, attempts to take David's life.

ously spoken with Saul, formally anointed him with oil, and prophesied over him to confirm God's leading. Saul had even received a spiritual touch from God to change his heart and prepare him for the daunting task ahead. Then...

"When Samuel brought all the tribes of Israel near, the tribe of Benjamin was chosen. Then he brought forward the tribe of Benjamin, clan by clan, and Matri's clan was chosen. Finally Saul son of Kish was chosen. But when they looked for him, he was not to be found.

So they inquired further of the LORD, 'Has the man come here yet?'

And the LORD said, 'Yes, he has hidden himself among the baggage.' They ran and brought him out, and as he stood among the people he was a head taller than any of the others.

Samuel said to all the people, 'Do you see the man the LORD has chosen? There is no one like him among all the people.'

Then the people shouted, 'Long live the king!'" (1 Samuel 10)

In other words, at the great moment

of becoming king, Saul hid behind some luggage.

I hate to admit it, but I often found this behavior appealing, even cute. I would remember the feeling of being singled out for special praise. My heart would do a sort of leap as I looked out on the audience and thought, "Oh, no, really, not me!" Of course, I was also thrilled with recognition and hungry for more. Perhaps my impulse to hide my face came less from fear of the audience and more from fear of my own, bald appetite for more glory. It is terrifying when some public occasion brings that ravenous appetite into view.

But was Saul just being modest? No; we can rule that out right away. Saul had no problem with humility.

Later in his career, he flew into a rage when David killed Goliath and won the people's applause. They sang, "Saul has killed his thousands, but David has killed his tens of thousands" and Saul seethed with jealousy. No small, yellow flicker of jealousy, either: Saul's demand for greater recognition flamed up to consume his entire identity.

Humility says, "I know God, and I

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Living For Applause?

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am at peace about what He has made me."

Moses was not known as shy or retiring, but Scripture tells us he was the "most humble" man on the face of the earth (Numbers 12). Why? Because even when he presided over the birth of a nation, he recognized that everything he had came from God, and he made no boasts among his peers.

False humility says, "Oh, no, not precious little me! I have to hide." "Precious little me" is the focus.

Reality to Saul was what he could see, hear, and manipulate. In a battle against the Philistines, Saul asks a priest to begin the ceremony to seek God's aid. What may seem odd in the heat of battle was a tradition for Israel, a nation whose existence was based on God's works. But while Saul was talking to the priest, the tumult in the Philistine camp increased more and more. So Saul said to the priest, "Withdraw your hand" (1 Samuel 14).

Why bother to seek the Lord when your own clever battle plan will do just as well?

Saul's example should stir us. Like so many of us, Saul's *reality* was the world of perceptions, and consequently, he became one of the Bible's most spectacular failures. Selfish ambition twisted him against his closest followers, God's commands, and even his own son, Jonathan. Determined to preserve his once-impressive image to the very last, Saul commits suicide in a losing battle, rather than let it be said that Philistines finished him off.

Can't God's people do any better? Indeed yes, and just as the Bible delivers

an incisive indictment against the shallow life, it delivers the solution.

Some years before Saul's rise and fall, a truly impressive character lived in the hill country of Ephraim. We don't know if she looked impressive outwardly, as Saul did, and her career included no great political achievements. However, her very different spiritual decisions transformed the leadership of her nation.

She was Hannah, one of Elkanah's two wives. Their marital situation was a tragic impasse. The other wife, Peninnah, had several children whereas Hannah was barren. So Peninnah taunted Hannah, and tormented her.

Although the Elkanah clearly loved Hannah, he had a poor grasp of her trouble. When she grieved and longed to be a mother, he could only say: "Hannah, why are you weeping? Why don't you eat? Why are you downhearted? Don't I mean more to you than ten sons?" (1 Samuel 1)

The family faithfully kept religious observances, including trips to the town of Shiloh for special worship. On one occasion, Hannah slipped into the "house of the Lord" there, and poured out her soul in silent prayer. She was so intent that her lips moved with her words, and

the elderly priest, Eli, misread what he saw:

"How long will you keep on getting drunk? Get rid of your wine."

"Not so, my lord," Hannah replied, "I am a woman who is deeply troubled. I have not been drinking wine or beer; I was pouring out my soul to the LORD. Do not take your servant for a wicked

woman; I have been praying here out of my great anguish and grief."

Eli answered, "Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him" (1 Samuel 1).

Hannah did not just ask for something. She also made God a promise that if God granted her a son, she would dedicate him to serve God in God's

For years no one could see Hannah's success...

"house" at Shiloh. We have prayers of dedication at churches today, but the parents always bundle up their dedicated babies and happily take them home.

Hannah's promise was different. When God answered her prayer with a baby boy not long after, Hannah raised him carefully for three years, and then took him to Eli to be brought up in Shiloh. Samuel no longer lived in his parent's house, but grew up and served in God's.

Hannah's little boy became Samuel, the prophet and judge.

So what went through Hannah's mind as she entrusted her son to the priest, Eli? How did she know Samuel would be all right? Didn't she want more tangible control over her son's upbringing? (I'm a parent now, with a three-year-old child, like Samuel... it makes you think.)

Let's compare Hannah to Saul for a moment. What moved Saul's heart to joy? Among other things, he was excited by revenge on his enemies, and fame in song. What moved Hannah? The Bible describes at least two times when she was refreshed or even delighted in spirit.

The first moment came after she had prayed to the Lord in Shiloh. She had received no vision or prophetic word, no tangible evidence that a boy would be on his way. But she answered Eli's blessing:

"She said, 'May your servant find



Hannah weeping.

favor in your eyes.' Then she went her way and ate something, and her face was no longer downcast" (1 Samuel 1). How could she rejoice when she walked away from prayer at Shiloh with nothing in her hands?

The second moment was stranger still. After she left her Samuel in Shiloh with Eli, she praised God in a spectacular song. Hannah didn't know how Samuel would turn out or that she would soon have other children. Could you rejoice with her when she left Shiloh without her little boy?

Saul could not have. Saul needed to see something and hold it to know that it was valuable. Hannah had a firm grasp on something: her faith laid hold on God. Here are some notes from Hannah's triumph song—the song she sang after she had seemingly lost her son.

"My heart rejoices in the LORD; in the LORD my horn is lifted high. My mouth boasts over my enemies, for I delight in your deliverance."

"Do not keep talking so proudly or let your mouth speak such arrogance, for the LORD is a God who knows, and by him deeds are weighed" (1 Samuel 2).

For years, no one could see Hannah's success, though Saul's value as a king seemed immediately apparent. Hannah knew her success was safest when it was given to God, and to all appearances was no longer hers at all. The

Lord, not Hannah, would receive the credit. But man's estimation did not matter to her anyway: the Lord knows, and His weights are the weights that truly count.

If you are not a Christian, I hope



Hannah presents Samuel to Eli the priest.

these Old Testament stories trouble you a little. At least part of their unsettling nature lies in the familiarity of Saul, and the alien nature of people like Hannah. Her kind of strangeness is all over the Bible, right up to the unearthly claims of Jesus Christ about Himself.

Here was a man who literally

called it his "purpose" to endure shame, torture and death—with no immediate rewards. He rose from the dead, but not to preside over a festival of resurrection appearances and worldwide miracles: He presided instead over the spiritual re-birth of his followers, who then set about slowly turning the world upside-down.

Christian, weigh yourself. What do you really value? Have you taken God's values to be fame in Christian work, numbers in your program, or tangible influence? What value have you set on unseen things?

See how Saul weighed things. Should I obey God? Well, sure—unless it means waiting and waiting with no answer. Then waiting for Him is pointless, and I can take things into my own hands.

Now watch Hannah. Now the mother of a healthy boy, she feels secure each time her rival Peninnah glimpses her holding that little boy's hand. No more taunts now, with such a fine son by her side! But she weighs their earthly prospects against her unseen spiritual business, her promise, and the potential of a life hidden in God. Hannah had no way of knowing what would become of Samuel. She only knew that God always knows, and His unseen treasures are priceless. She chose Him.

Let's be done with worldly values.

Let's be willing to stake everything on that unseen reality.

Paul Till, Silliman '86

So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

—2 Corinthians 4

Seeing is Not Believing

I had always taken my sight for granted, but this past summer would make me reconsider what sight means.

I was having some problems seeing out of my right eye, so I thought to have it checked by my ophthalmologist. He checks my left eye, and it seems fine.

He then spends a long time looking at my right eye.

He tells me there's blood inside my eye, and I should go see a specialist. At that point, I am getting nervous.

The specialist examines my eye and tells me that my retina has detached. She explains that blood seeped into the fluid in the eye from the tear where the retina detached, causing my vision problems.

The only therapy available was surgery, and I would be unable to work for the next month or so due to the pain and light sensitivity.

After the initial shock and sadness, I went along with this, figuring that the summer was long and there would be plenty of time to do everything. I had a lot planned for the summer, what with my job, leading the youth group at my church, and spending time with family. I figured God was giving me some time off before things got busy. I'd just start a month later. A month can go by pretty quickly, right?

After the surgery, I truly understood what light sensitivity meant. Because of the way two eyes work in unison, what happens to one eye affects the other one. My right eye was so sensitive to light that using my

left eye caused the right one to hurt. As a result, I kept both eyes shut all the time and closed all the curtains in my room.

The first week or so after the surgery, I was in the dark—and in a lot of pain. Painkillers kept me relaxed.

By the third week, I was completely sick of listening to the radio and to books on tape. Being stuck in a dark room was making me stir crazy and impatient.

Well, I'd just grit my teeth and wait it out.

Maybe God was trying to teach me patience or something.

About five weeks later, I felt a lot better, and was set to resume a full schedule. However, my retinologist told me that the surgery hadn't worked, and she recommended repeating the operation. I struggled over this question for some time. Should I give up yet *another* month of my summer? Would the pain and blindness be worth it?

After getting much advice and praying, I realized that I shouldn't give

in to my fear. It wouldn't be easy but I knew God would be with me through it all, and I shouldn't be afraid. I elected to have the surgery done.

The surgery itself didn't go smoothly, but my recovery was ahead of schedule, and I was happier than I had been after the first operation. God was teaching me a lesson about trusting Him, and I had the peace that comes with that trust. With about three weeks left before school began, everything was working out well.

Then I was in church listening to a special speaker when my right eye started watering. I didn't think too much of it, because it happened whenever I went into a room that was too bright, or whenever I was tired.

Half an hour later, however, it was as if my head imploded. An amazing amount of pain hit me, I started feeling cold and dizzy, and had to sit down, close my eyes, and put my head between my knees. An hour passed before I was able to stand up again. I went to a friend's house nearby and I tried to sleep after taking some Advil.

The pain didn't go away. My dad eventually called the doctor at her house

...she said
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and that the retina had
detached again...



Simson, fourth from the right, and his friends.

and asked her to examine me.

At the office an hour later, she said the second surgery hadn't worked either, and that the retina had detached again, again releasing blood into my eye. This time, though, the fluid pressure in my eye built up, which caused the pain.

The first two surgeries didn't work, so more surgery wouldn't solve the problem. The only hope would be to let the eye drain naturally. She gave me more eye drops to help this, but basically, all I could do was wait.

This was by far the worst of the summer. For the next two weeks, I was unable to sleep, eat, or see. The light sensitivity was so bad that all light bothered me, so I was in pitch darkness 24 hours a day. After two months of recovering from surgery, I had lost a lot of weight and strength. I lost patience a long time ago, and much of my day was spent questioning what God was doing to me, and why. What could I possibly learn from this? All my plans for the summer were meant to glorify Him!

My pastor pointed out to me that the problem wasn't with my plans, but rather with the intentions behind the plans. In essence, I was telling God what I was going to do, and asking Him to bless it. I should've been searching for what He was telling me to do. As I thought about it, I remembered something that happened after the second surgery.

I had to go to see my doctor for a follow-up. I was still very light sensitive, so I kept both eyes closed.

You know how when you're walking through a dark room, and you sense where everything is? "Okay, the table is a little out of arms reach away, the refrigerator is on my right, and the sink is about three steps ahead of me." That



*Faith never knows
where it is being led
but it loves and knows
the One who is leading.*

—Oswald Chambers

was how I was, 24 hours a day.

This sense works well in your house, as long as nothing gets moved too much, and you know where you're starting from. Walking around is a substantial problem once you leave the house.

In the office building, my Dad was walking me down the hall to the doctor's room. I could sense the walls on my left and right, but it seemed as if my dad wasn't walking parallel. Just before I thought I would hit my shoulder on the wall, I stopped.

"What's wrong?" my dad said.

"Isn't there a wall there?"

"No, let's go."

"Are you sure?"

The stupidity of my question didn't strike me until much later. Here we are, father and son, walking down a narrow hall at around one in the afternoon. I cannot see at all, and my dad is leading me by the hand.

I'm trusting my own instincts ahead of his vision? I'm asking him if *he's* sure?

How much do we do this with God? Because when it comes to our future, we are completely blind. Who knows what is coming up a year or even a day from now?

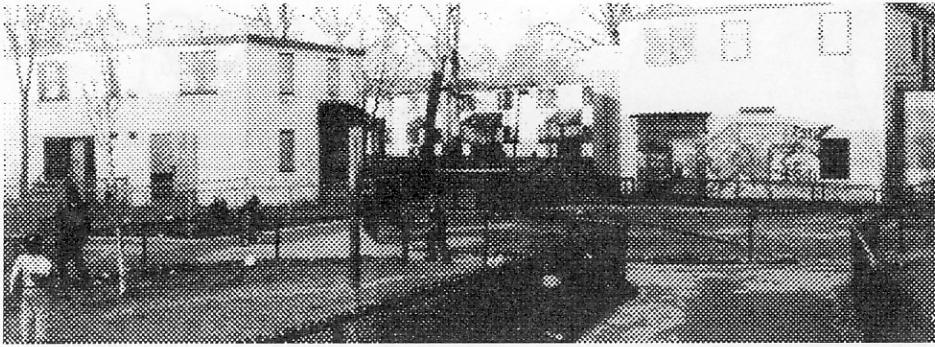
We can resist and follow our own instincts—flailing at our blindness to the future. But wouldn't it be much wiser to trust our loving Father, who sees what lies before us? He has a purpose for all he puts in our lives, and we can step into it, trusting in Him.

I'm completely blind in my right eye now. But the pain subsided in time for school last semester. Words cannot express how happy I was to see everything on campus. Al-

though I was far from 100%, God always provided someone there to help out when I needed it, and when we have Christ in our lives, we have a loving wonderful guide all down this road of life.

"We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (Romans 8).

Simson Hui, Pierson '97



A Mighty Long Way...

Sheryl, a resident of New Haven, comes from the tougher parts of the city. Her testimony not only gives us a glimpse of a life beyond the walls of Yale, it testifies to the truth that "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (2 Corinthians 5).

My testimony to all: Well, let me start out with, 'God is a great God!' and the reason for this is, He's brought me a mighty long way today.

My life started as a child in horror. My father I never knew. My stepfather was an alcoholic. He was very abusive towards my mother. I watched terrible beatings all my life.

When I turned four, my grandmother who raised me told me I was in a terrible car accident. I suffered three missing ribs on my left side of my ribcage, a torn pancreas, a broken jaw in two places and two broken legs. Well, I survived that accident with God's help. He was watching over me.

Well, things began to move on as I was bounced from one foster home to another. I left my last foster home at the age of 15. I raised myself in the streets. I turned to drugs, prostitution, and crack. I drank like a pig. All because I wanted love.

In March 30th of 1992, I was in another major car accident. The car took me way up in the air and I landed on my legs. Both of them were crushed. My head was split

Above: A New Haven neighborhood on Webster Street.

Right: A Yale doorway near the corner of Crown and York Streets.

in the front in 7 fine areas. I lost two and a half pints of blood. They did what is called bone graft surgery, which is when they operate on a certain part of your body and take the bone and split it and put it into an area in your body that needs it. Well, they operated on my hip and took part of it out and put it in one of my legs.

Today I am blessed. The doctor said I would never walk again and that I would not be normal. Today because of Jesus and a miracle I can function normal and I can walk. I walk with a limp for the rest of my life, but at least, I can walk.

Today I am normal. What a miracle! I have been saved now for four years. I am a recovering addict and I love Jesus so much.... I have so much more I can tell you all but it would take a lifetime to say it. So instead I write this much to say, God is real and he lives and he does heal.

I'm a witness. He is alive. I can tell you for proof. And he loves you all just the way you are. You don't have to be perfect and you don't have to be a man and you can come to him in pants, shorts, anything. He loves you just the way you are.

Things don't take overnight. One step at a time. This is what it took for me. So I know He will do it for you also. Well, till we meet. Jesus loves you!

All love in the Lord,

Sheryl Richie

