



**THEN**

**AND**

**NOW**



By:

Charles R. Solomon, Ed.D.  
Author, *Handbook to Happiness*



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## THEN AND NOW

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As I view the current situation in our country, I can not help but compare it with adverse circumstances earlier in my life. Being born in 1930, my recollections as a child are heavily flavored with the deprivation and stress caused by the Great Depression in the '30's. Then, my years from 11-15 were colored by the turmoil of World War II with families losing loved ones, separations caused by war, and husbands and boy friends coming home from war who were not the same men who left home. While there are similarities in the events we are facing now, the background of our people to endure adversity is such that the younger people are totally unprepared for what they could face. Let me hasten to say that the older people are not excited about the prospects of a repeat performance, but they would have some experience on which to base their response.

During the Depression, a small percentage of the populace had the privilege of escapes but most had to endure grinding poverty. True, there were some who enjoyed wealth and prosperity and who profited by being able to amass great estates by the purchase of distressed properties at a token of their value, with some being sold for the taxes due on them. Speaking of properties, there was not the general use of mortgages to buy or

build homes so those who borrowed money to do so usually were indebted to individuals or local banks. Then, the failure of the banks added to an already bad situation.

In large cities there were such things as soup kitchens where the hungry could at least get some food for survival, but in the rural areas there was no organized welfare program and social security was just being organized after Franklin Delano Roosevelt became president. He set about to develop public works programs (WPA, PWA, NRA, etc.) to provide minimum employment to bootstrap the economy. The majority of the population had to employ whatever resources they could command to eke out an existence. It goes without saying that young people did not have to resort to 'hanging out' since there was no place to hang and no money with which to finance it. Since it was largely an agrarian society, having large families was an advantage because there were more able bodies to do the farm work. As a result, young people learned to work and did not complain about the long hours; many began to do a man's work as pre-teens which did them no harm but helped them to grow up into responsible, God-fearing adults. Of course, TV had not yet been invented and few families had radios in rural America until the late 30's when battery radios began to proliferate. In many areas, electricity had not yet become widely available; and this was not to be corrected until shortly after WWII when the Rural Electrification Association (REA) came into being.

With the absence of manufactured amusements, young people found their association geared primarily to church activities; and the church became the focal point of all community gatherings. Since automobiles were not widely available, it was unusual to have one per family, let alone extra automobiles for family members. Walking to church and school was common and sharing of available transportation was done without thinking. In fact, it was the rule rather than the exception that those who had shared with those who were without. The moral fiber was such that there was little in the way of thievery or looting. I am reminded of a story told by my father-in-law where a neighbor would visit his corn crib and take just enough corn to feed his family who were at the point of starvation. Though my father-in-law knew that he was taking it, he never mentioned it to him since it was a way he could help the neighbor at his point of need without humiliating him.

Many people, such as my own family, had deficiencies in food, clothing, and shelter with central heat; and, frequently in rural areas, running water and insulated homes were unavailable luxuries. Clothing was passed down until it was worn threadbare, and parents sometimes did without so their children could eat. Such lack would obviously result in family members pitching in and doing all that they could to help the family survive; this developed resourcefulness and discipline which stood young men in good stead as they entered into the war years and

had to take on the responsibilities of flying warplanes in their very early 20's (these planes did not have the posh instrumentation that is common in modern planes). The old saying that 'Necessity is the mother of invention' certainly applied before and during the wartime years.

Meanwhile, back at the farm, there were deprivations because of the war. All of us gathered up scrap metal which was used to melt down and process into war machines. Iron, steel, lead, copper, and other items, could be salvaged and recycled which was done before the word became popular. Rationing of gasoline and foodstuffs such as coffee and sugar were commonplace. Each automobile owner received an A, B, or C sticker for his windshield, with the A sticker getting about four gallons of gas per week, as I remember. The C sticker was reserved for people such as my father who worked in the defense effort, building army installations and buildings for the defense industry. Obviously, young people neither had a car nor the gasoline with which to run it so that wheels for teens were not a consideration. Too, the young men knew that being drafted for the war was almost a certainty unless they were deferred due to physical problems, farm work, or being employed in vital defense industry to supply materiel and munitions to the military. Due to the shortage of men, women were pressed into service in the shipyards and aircraft factories, which was a major departure from the social structure prior to the war when there

was, on the average, one breadwinner per family.

The war, with its family separations and absence of mores enforced by parents and extended family, began to break down some of the time honored traditions so that many of the men away from family ties and restraints became involved in sexual immorality, alcohol, and other sinful activities which were not an option when they were at home struggling for survival. During the depression, and the war which followed, it was necessary for everyone to pull together for the common good. For the common man, the use of funds for trips, recreation, and amusements were not even an option; teens were fortunate if they had their needs met, and they did not lobby for gadgets, which they knew were impossible for their families to provide. The absence of wheels (other than possibly a shared bicycle), TV's, tape recorders, CD's, cell phones (in many cases, there was no phone for the family except for an occasional party line) and other such things that today's youth think indispensable, made reading and study very desirable activities.

Family times of singing around a piano, sharing about the day's activities around a common table, where everyone ate every meal together, gave impetus to strong family ties. Extra food was usually not available nor was fast food, frozen dinners, and microwaves. Working together on the family farm, eating together, and praying together made for strong families with shared values,

ideals, and goals. Going into the war, this was true; coming out of the war, and the reconstruction which followed, began the gradual erosion of values where materialism and the rise of secular humanism began to have an insidious effect on the social structure. The invention of the modern conveniences and the mobility made possible by automobiles coupled together to begin the disintegration of the family structure. There were options now so that the church was no longer the center of social interaction, and spiritual values and ties began to lose their power to provide cohesiveness in the family and society. As a result, the individual became the focus; selfishness was promoted to the exclusion of shared values and concerns, especially by the media and advertising agencies.

When the family and spiritual pursuits were no longer the means of choice in meeting the needs of the individual, it was necessary to replace these with a variety of substitutes which gave rise to the industry of the helping professions or the behavioral sciences—including social workers, psychologists and psychiatrists, which weren't around prior to WWII. Early in the century, Sigmund Freud laid the foundations for modern psychiatry with William James and others paving the way for the discipline of psychology. With Freud's emphasis on the psychosexual constructs and the rise of secular humanism, the rails were in place for the sexual revolution of the 60's and the derailing of the spiritual and moral foundation on

which our country was built. The founding documents of our country were built on the Bible; however, this heritage has been discarded in the wake of secular humanism. This world view aggressively opposes all Biblical absolutes and has effectively destroyed the foundation of our country. It will topple the nation's superstructure in short order, unless God intervenes.

All of this has served to rip apart the moral fabric of our nation such that personal relationships and business practices can no longer assume basic trust or integrity. The corruption has been demonstrated in the collapse of Enron, Arthur Andersen, Tyco, MCI/World Com causing a domino effect in other major players in the corporate scene as well as in the stock market. These failures have cost many their fortunes and retirement funds. When basic dishonesty has usurped the lead from basic trust on which our country was built, it follows that only a major spiritual awakening can replace the building blocks. Add to this mix the terrorist attack of 9/11 and the burgeoning war effort (which assumes the support and pulling together of the citizenry); and we see that, absent the spiritual dimension, our society could easily collapse like a house of cards!

Let's make a brief comparison of the younger generation of today with their predecessors of yesteryear. The WWII generation has been variously described as the stalwart generation and the generation on which modern America was built. They had been accustomed to hard work and sacrifice so that the hardships of war were not

the first they had endured. They had undergone privation and had lived with bare necessities which prepared them for that which they were to face. Their identities were based on sacrifice and hard work which flowered under the exigencies of war which demanded that they give their best with only survival as the possible reward. Their moral fiber was based on spiritual values, albeit some being second-hand, with integrity and honesty being cornerstones of their being. When called upon to forsake personal pursuits and goals, their allegiance to God and country prepared them to do so without question; Omaha Beach, Iwo Jima, and Anzio are prime examples of the self-sacrifice and unquestioning obedience to authority that resulted in freedom being preserved for future generations.

### That Was Then; This is Now

Whereas their forebears were concerned with surviving with spiritual values and daily pursuits for the common good, today's youth have been conditioned to expect prosperity, the fruits of materialism, and the so-called 'good life' with its pleasures and trinkets. This amounts to consummate selfishness. Since we are no longer in an agrarian society, the tasks which occupied their grandparents were not available so that the younger generation has grown up with insufficient meaningful work to fill their spare time and to teach them the value of working for what

they have; too many have had not only their needs met, but also their desires for designer clothes and various and sundry means of entertainment. They are not content merely to have shoes as we were at their age; they must have expensive articles to match their clothing, all of which must bear brand names and logos with which to gain acceptance from their peers. Nor are they content with the appearance which God gave them so they pierce their bodies and otherwise augment them to match what they perceive to be their identities.

Now, let's fast forward and place wartime demands on those with the above identity, and we will find that such an identity is totally unsuited to the demands and rigors of sacrifice and self-denial. It is one thing to go from surviving to abounding; it is quite another to go from abounding to surviving! Reversing the procedure will result in fractured egos, lost identities, confused life purpose, and frustrated long and short range plans to base life. Individuals who experience such catastrophes may recover in some manner so long as there are family members or societal structures which will back them up. When economic collapse is the rule rather than the exception, it is realistic to expect chaos and anarchy. When goals are frustrated, it is not unusual for a person to vent his anger on the one(s) whom he perceives as bringing his negative circumstances to pass—in this case, our President and those in government who support his decisions. Rather than having the whole country

pulling together as we saw in WWII, it is highly likely that the country will be pulling apart and attacking leadership with the result that we would have a country divided against itself. A protracted war would only result in the gulf becoming increasingly greater and exacerbating such a division.

Whereas the family of old worked, played, and prayed together, it is now uncommon for the family even to eat together! Today, each member of the family may have an automobile, equipped with a cell phone so that the family might be able to communicate in an emergency, if not at meals. Then, there is the penchant for 'hanging out' (which is generally an euphemism for wasting time and getting in trouble). While it is possible for those 'hanging out' to be using their time for spiritual purposes, this is not the case in most cases. Typically, this involves 'partying' and 'poor choices', popular jargon for old fashioned sin!

Now, let's suppose the props that support the aforementioned amusements of today's youth culture are removed so that the young person cannot escape home nor responsibilities. When he can not escape from himself or his family, how will he view himself and what will he do? It is fairly easy to see that some major frustration would result. The trauma would be widespread if we have some major blows to our country's infrastructure, which might involve gas rationing or other curtailing of the 'good life'. And, then, if his parents are deriving their meaning and identity from the provisions of materialism, a

sudden downturn in income would cramp their style. It would become impossible to continue to provide the level of income to which the entire family has grown accustomed. The resulting frustration level could produce a high level of anger which likely would be vented on other family members, those outside the family, and toward society as a whole. On the national scene, this could produce a boiling cauldron of anger which would devastate our society.

Whereas the older generation had moral integrity and learned to pull together in times of need, the younger generation is more likely to blast apart. Rather than sharing with the needy on a voluntary basis, it is more likely that those who are being denied their 'rights' will take from those who have possessions and food at gun point. Such scenes of looting and/or vandalism have been seen too many times in the recent past. A fairly recent example of this was the rioting in London when there was a shortage of employment.

There is one added dimension that men at war have not had to face before in that homeland security was taken for granted. Those at home were concerned about the safety of their family members who were at war; now, those at war have the capability of defending themselves but leave behind family who could be in danger of terrorists at any turn. This could easily demoralize those away from families and make them less effective in their duties.

Enter the Church with an  
Identity Independent of  
World Events!

That is the bad news! The good news is that the church can provide the answer for individuals and families to find their identities in the Lord Jesus Christ rather than temporal relationships, possessions, and performance (which are fleeting, at best). Although few churches are teaching this, there is more truth to learn and appropriate beyond salvation. Unfortunately, most Christians are living out of identities based on performance and possessions rather than their true identity in Christ. When Christians, as well as non-Christians, are living out of identities and resources other than the Lord Jesus, the stage is set for widespread conflicts that only a Holy Spirit revival can resolve. To say it another way, the church, as well as the individual, is going to be faced with an identity crisis in that there must be an identity based on *dying* to replace the current one based on *doing*. This will necessitate the church's coming to the end of itself where living out of dedicated human resources and asking God for help proves grossly insufficient such that Holy Spirit revival is not only desirable but absolutely vital!

When the 'down pressure' of war on the economy and the emotional stress on the individuals and family, there is the absolute necessity of the stabilizing influence that can only be provided by the church. Only the church can provide the way in

which the foregoing identity issues can be resolved; self-strength is grossly insufficient to move from an indulgent identity that questions authority to one that is self-sacrificing and unquestioning in its obedience to instituted authority.

However, the church has also been negatively impacted by the erosion of family values and the destructive influence of materialism and the myriad influences that array themselves to compete with that which the church has to offer. Too, today's church is more program-driven than it is Spirit-led. When behavioral difficulties surface, it is not unthinkable to refer those involved to the behavioral sciences, hopefully Christian, in an attempt to resolve psychological and behavioral difficulties. No longer is the church the center of activities for the community, and it is encouraged to be 'politically correct' in its interface with the community to avoid confronting the community with its sin, with 'toleration' being the operative word.

It is not likely that needed revival will be fostered in large meetings or crusades. The younger generations have been conditioned not to look to the Church to find real answers to real problems; therefore, they have found substitute answers in the fruits of materialism. Many believers have tried everything that they know the church has to offer only to be disappointed. Having been saved, they have not found their identity in Christ and a way to appropriate the Spirit-filled life which is the ultimate answer to their problem. All too often,

they have been given psychological answers to spiritual problems which may help in the short term, but not in the long term, when only miraculous answers will suffice.

Both of the identities described above are based on self-effort, directed or misdirected—good flesh or irresponsible flesh. The Church, in the main, has majored in developing believers with a good work ethic in the Lord's work. Or, to put it another way, inside or outside the church, behavior is motivated to a large degree by human understanding and motivation with people, performance, and power having more influence than we would like to admit. The corporate identity of the Church reflects that of its members who are *doing in order to be* as opposed to *being in order to do*. Whereas the identity of the believer and the church should be derived from brokenness and denying self-strength, the typical church growth seminar is not heavy on plenary sessions to do with denying ourselves and taking up the Cross. There is decidedly more emphasis on the growth of the organization than there is on the growth of the organism! Thus, those who can demonstrate success by numbers and buildings tend to have more platform than the ones who go through brokenness into wholeness. Doing takes precedence over being which necessarily involves holiness of life—resurrection life emanating from being crucified with Christ.

Too, the Christian press does not give emphasis to the believer's identity in Christ since the Cross is not

typically the place where the populace gathers because it is a place of suffering and death which necessarily precedes resurrection. It is much more pleasant and palatable to do an end run around the Cross and provide answers which tend to be more psychological than spiritual when a believer is going through brokenness that is preparing him for losing his life in order to save it (Matt. 16:24,25).

If the church is to lead believers out of defeat in the Wilderness into the victory and rest of Canaan, it must model it in message and method. Continuing to circle the Wilderness is hardly the way to lead believers across the Jordan! Only as the church, and the believers which comprise it, find their identities in Christ will it minister in resurrection power that will capture the attention of the world; when that happens, the world will understand that there are resources that it knows not of. The whole world is in a state of flux where a strong church that is demonstrating God's power could lead and have a following.

The younger generations who will be fighting the battles can not change the identities out of which they are living any more than their predecessors, most of whom are also living out of fleshly identities. Only as believers go through the death/resurrection process will they know the empowering for life and ministry.

Now, A Resource for the Church  
in Provision of Identity

The foregoing rationale is not pious double talk nor is it a mystical message that can not be taught in simple terms. Rather, it is a mystery why the church does not preach the Cross, the power of God (1 Corinthians 1:18) and witness the life-changing power of the Holy Spirit. Since God called Grace Fellowship International (GFI) into being in 1969, there has been teaching, counseling, and discipleship which has spread around the world where believers are shown the simplicity of exchanging the self-life for the Christ-life which is sometimes known as renewal or revival. Once this is revealed reality in their lives, they are taught to communicate it to others; in this way, revival can spread from person to person, church to church, and across the country.

As this takes place, the believer receives an identity rather than building one. He begins to live out of Christ as his life rather than the aggregate of his life experiences—good and bad; life transformations are common and those who are in great need are not forced to wait long periods of time for the Holy Spirit to effect such changes. The experience gained in a third of a century by GFI, and other ministries which have come into being since its inauguration, is available to the church in person and via media to rapidly disseminate the message which the Holy Spirit will honor with transformed lives, families,

and churches which will spread out to the country.

Previous generations of believers have discovered that appropriating abundant life in Christ freed them from life-besetting problems. Scripture such as Galatians 2:20 summarize God's supernatural resources for living 'Galatians 2:20'. This deeper quality of abiding in Christ requires the believer to deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Christ. When the Holy Spirit is allowed to control or empower the Christian life, stubborn psychological problems are usually resolved as well. Many devotional writers have expounded the supernatural benefits of appropriating Christ as one's source of living. For example, Andrew Murray, Watchman Nee, Oswald Chambers, and F. B. Meyer have enriched the Body of Christ by explaining these life transforming truths.

Grace Fellowship International has continued to develop materials and strategies to help people with problems such as those anticipated above. GFI still offers personal counseling, materials, training (on-site and remote), and media through our web site and in hard copy.

Back in 1965, God delivered me from chronic psychological problems through the discovery of my personal identification with Christ. In 1970, I was led of the Lord to leave the field of engineering and contracts and focus on developing a short term Biblical counseling process based on the doctrine of union with Christ. It has been amazing to witness the way God has transformed the lives of

thousands of counselees over the past four decades. The opportunity for full-time Exchanged Life counseling came through the founding of Grace Fellowship International in 1969. The process of *Spirituotherapy*<sup>®</sup>, as I designated it in my doctoral studies, was explained in my book *Handbook to Happiness*. Since its publication, God has blessed many with these truths. Praise God, over 300,000 copies have been sold in English, Spanish, Korean, Romanian, and Russian. Over the years, other counseling centers were established and in 1986 some of them became affiliated in the Association of Exchanged Life Ministries (AELM).

We invite your prayer and support to spread this vital approach to Biblical discipleship and counseling. Perhaps God will lead you to partner with us in communicating this message broadly—nationally and internationally. Presently, there are GFI affiliated ministries in India, South Africa, Romania and Ukraine. *Handbook to Happiness* is now available in Spanish, Korean, Romanian and Russian. A condensation of chapter 2, *The Wheel and Line*, is now over 40 languages, most of which can be viewed on our web site.

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**RESOURCES  
AVAILABLE FROM  
GRACE FELLOWSHIP  
INTERNATIONAL**

**Books by Dr. Charles Solomon:**

*Handbook to Happiness*  
*Ins and Out of Rejection*  
*Rejection Syndrome and the Way to Acceptance*  
*Handbook to Happiness & You*  
*Handbook for Christ-Centered Counseling*  
*From Pastors to Pastors: Testimonies of  
Revitalized Ministries*  
*Discipling the Desperate*  
*Handbook for Soldiers of the Cross*  
*For Me To Live Is Christ*  
*Wheel & Line Tract*  
*Romans Road Tract*  
*Wisdom of (Charles R.) Solomon*  
*3 Volumes of Exchanged Life Poetry*  
*Gems & Jargon*

**Trilogy:**

*The Roman Road*  
*Let Us Rise Up and Build...the Church*  
*Completing the Reformation*

**Books by Dr. John Woodward:**

*Man as Spirit, Soul, and Body*  
*Blessed Reassurance*

**Training:**

Exchanged Life Conference  
Exchanged Life Workshop  
Solomon School of *Spiritotherapy*<sup>™</sup>  
Distance Education Certificate  
Distance Education Diploma  
Online Courses

**Media Materials:**

Conference CDs and DVDs  
Conference Notebook

Grace Fellowship International

**Book by Dr. Phil Jones:**

*How To Exchange Your Life For a New One*

**Book by John Stevens:**

*Suicide: An Illicit Lover*

**Books by Dr. Lee Turner:**

*Grace Discipleship Course*

*Advanced Grace Discipleship Course*

**Book by Captain Reginald Wallis:**

*The New Life*

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