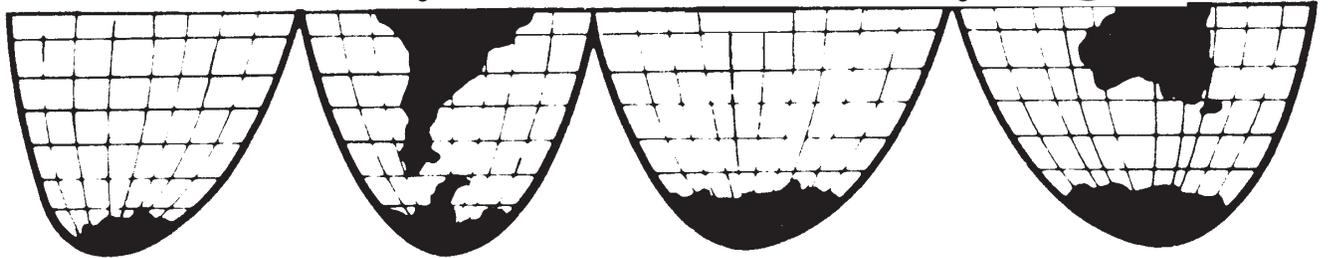


PRAYER IS THE MIGHTIEST FORCE • II CHRON. 7:14



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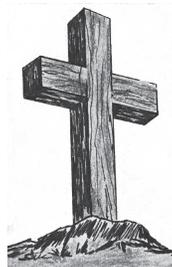
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The current approval of obscenity on national television and radio illustrates an embarrassing trend: the subjugation of wholesome language and plain decency to a vociferous, outspoken few whose vocabulary is very limited. We must retain our affection for wholesome language, biblical values and common decency, promoting the writings of Tolstoy, C.S. Lewis, T. S. Elliot, Albert Schweitzer, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Fulton Oursler, St. Augustine, Chrysostom, St. Thomas Aquinas, for instance, over obnoxious and cynical personalities of the 21st century, who mock God at every turn.

There are many who think that our country is steadily slipping into a moral abyss. According to a poll conducted by *U. S. News & World Report*, "A vast majority of Americans feel their country has reached an ill-mannered watershed. Nine out of 10 Americans think incivility is a serious problem, and nearly one-half think it is extremely serious." People in general have lost the capacity to distinguish the "profane from the profound," it is no wonder reverence for God is at low ebb. The words that make life rich and inspiring are lost in the blur. He who has no control over his language is like a paralytic craftsman on the finishing board.

When the heart is pure, the language we articulate becomes pure and wholesome. "*For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh*" (Matthew 12:34b). The Lord penetrates every nook and cranny of our being. Crude language cripples the individual and limits his ability to express and frame ideas and thoughts that elevate decency and public decorum. The language a person uses often reveals more than his words. Today's society is inundated with profanity—irreverent use of God's name. Every foul word takes a piece out of wholesome language. We should venerate the image of God. The people who take God's name in vain get rousing cheers when they reinforce irreverent use of the language. Furthermore, they refuse to give heed to the admonition of the Lord who said, "*thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain*" (Exodus 20:7).

Our ears should burn at the sound of vulgarity and profanity. We profane His holy name when we become partakers of that which is unholy. Some Christians see no problem watching X-rated

movies which are filled with profanity, sex and violence. There is a magnetic pull to sin and compromise. A recent poll shows that over 20 percent of preachers are addicted to pornography. Many Christians are unprepared for the pressure Satan would induce upon them in order to sift them as wheat. When God's holy standard is disregarded as a rule of authority, moral collapse is inevitable. How can we tell the world about the goodness of America when we are the largest exporter of pornography!

Our language affects our witness. There will be punitive action against those who take God's name in vain. So many in our society smear and defame the name of God without a twinge of conscience. People who use God's name without relationship are people who function without the knowledge of the holy. The moment we're tempted to have a debate with

God about 'biblical purity and morality,' stop. There is no debate when conscience speaks, conscience is God's gift to man. It is apparently clear that the enemy has used cunning men with pseudo learning, who disrespect and defame God, have laughed conscience out of court. Furthermore, they have forced the modern church and the Christians into a position where they are afraid or unwilling to upset their mega church members who dabble in social peccadilloes. The Word of the Lord is not afraid to admit the seriousness of having a good conscience. It says, "*Being convicted by their own conscience they went out one by one.*" Perhaps you're being convicted right now and may God help you give heed to the inner voice of God before it is too late! Let's keep our inner vision clear and unpolluted. The absence of morality and decency is the absence of God in modern America today.

Beware of all those who shamelessly glory in their usage of obscene language and encourage others to foster a similar vocabulary that corresponds to their own! For such people, obscenity becomes a crude way of expression. It has always been hard for a person who uses repulsive language to understand another person who conveys what is in his heart by using wholesome words. Since our Public School system has failed in the importance of cultural matters, it should be the responsibility of the church to undertake such task of training a generation that understands and upholds sacred traditions and



Matthew Skariah

Culture of Obscenity / Pornography

practices. The church is more than a meeting place once a week; it should be a 'breeding ground' for Christian thinkers and spiritual leaders who honor God with their lives.

One writer pointed out in a 1995 edition of *Ethics* magazine. "We rely on manners and civility

for the upkeep of a decent society," How can we maintain a decent society if we continue to use gutter language? Our language affects or lifestyle. Ours is an age that denigrates God and dignifies man. We know men and women by the wholesome language they use and the manner in which they conduct themselves before God and man.

*He who does not use wholesome language does not promote clear and plausible thinking.
We cannot impart holiness, we can only model holiness.*

Punchline: Barking Up The Wrong Tree by Matthew Skariah

One day Voltaire said to a friend, "It took twelve ignorant fishermen to establish Christianity. I will show the world how one Frenchman can destroy it." Voltaire was known as the paramount cynic of the 18th century who boldly proclaimed that if God did not exist, then we must invent one. Interesting, isn't it?

If Christianity could have been destroyed. Voltaire was the man to do so. He was the pride of his nation. The theatres of Paris and the literary circles throughout the empire jubilated with his praises. His writings were digested by millions. He was possessed with a photographic memory. His command of the language was almost perfect. His powers of sarcasm and wit were unrivaled. To put it rather mildly, everything was going his way and he was at the pinnacle of his game. He summoned all his powers and influence for the total annihilation of Christianity.

Today, the attack against Christianity continues. Remember, Christians grow in trials and persecutions. Tertullian, a Roman converted to Christianity, wrote: "The blood of the martyr is the seed of the church." In writing about the early Church, historian Will Durant said, "Christ met Caesar in the arena and Christ won." He is still with us today. I submit to you, no matter how corrupt this world becomes, no matter how devilish television, movies and the media become, no matter how much devil worship increases, no matter how far homosexuals force their agenda on society, no matter if the devil himself walks our streets—God will preserve His children. Make no mistake that God is winning and in the end the song shall be heard. David said, "The Lord forsakes not his saints, they are preserved for ever" (Psalms 37:28). Let's never forget that it was in the breakdown of Rome, Christianity flourished. The kingdom of God is not built by human hand—that which is not built by human hand cannot be destroyed by human hand.

People in general, have baptized themselves with the 'oil of self-sufficiency and self-importance.' It is ludicrous to suggest that man is self-sufficient; man is not self-sufficient for any of his basic needs. Furthermore, he is attempting to alter the human soul to fit his preferences, rather than changing his preferences to fit his soul. Man is, in reality, like an automobile whose electrical system is disconnected. He has all the components, but they do not function. He has an inbred capacity for immortality; he yearns for self-transcendence, a desire to exhilarate beyond and above himself. But the more he attempts to propel himself to be the 'top banana'—he is frustrated because he has not been able to conquer the unconquerable Christ. Thus, he is constantly at odds with his maker. Let's never forget that God alone has the power to hold infinity in the palm of His hand!

The Christian has a divine constitution which is given by God. The most wonderful constitution that there is, a constitution which even the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. The Christian remains faithful to Jesus Christ and His kingdom, and he humbly trusts the issues to God in sheer 'truth and faith.' There is nothing static about God. One can never break the spirit of a true Christian, and many have tried to do just that in history and they all failed utterly and miserably. The result will always be the same. Beloved, we can definitely count on God to light our way home. Don't ever try to get a jump start on God! Do not be afraid to swim against the tide of public opinion. Stand with God almighty, and your path will be clean and clear. Where are the tyrants of yester-years who persecuted the Christians? I will tell you where they are; today, their bodies lie in some forgotten tomb of antiquity. But on the other hand, the Savior lives forever in the hearts and minds of people of all persuasion who have accepted Him as Savior and Lord.

*Voltaire is dead—Jesus Christ is alive and changing lives the world over.
King Jesus lives forever! Glory to His blessed name!*

Speaking Candidly: Thoughts to Ponder . . . by Matthew Skariah

Someone has said, "We become so heavenly minded that we are of no earthly use." Dear brother and sister, this generation of believers is not, by and large, suffering from such a complex! In fact, the very opposite is true. The naked truth is that we are so earthly minded we are of no heavenly use.

I've known only a few Christians who would place themselves under rigid scrutiny in matters of Christian purity and biblical holiness. A Christian is to be holy, not unholy. The enemy of our soul deprecates the purity of God's Word, prompting us to present and accept water down

version of the gospel which excuses sin and carnality.

One's faith is 'holy and possessive.' It is impossible for the world to comprehend the mind of a person who venerates the image of God. If Satan can undermine faith, weaken our spiritual muscles, and then he has derailed a life, blackmailed a soul, and confused the would-be believers. Let's not cling to a faith that's inherited or borrowed, but a faith that's vibrant, relevant and built upon Christ, the solid Rock! In the final analysis the case for Christianity must rest upon the living testimony of its followers!

*God imparts His divine nature to us by His sovereign grace.
That is precisely why John H. Jowett points out, "the grace aboveness."*

You Make the Call . . . True Worship

True worship is not a time of self-improvement or personal enrichment. The tragedy of the modern-day worship is that the emphasis is on "self" rather than God; real worshippers always recognize their sinfulness and the holiness of His imperial majesty. Worship should be entrenched in the holiness of God, and it is an undeniable recognition of the inimitable presence of the Almighty. The divine voice is not always expressed in sermons, buzz-words, slogans, speeches and clichés. It is more of a heart consciousness than man consciousness.

What does the Lord require of today's worshipper, not style or meticulous performance, but purity of heart and a sense of God's divine presence? It is in the presence of Jehovah God that we revel as we raise our voices to Him who is the object of our worship. The simplicity of true worship is lost as worshippers seek to foster an atmosphere of fun and frolic in the name of Christian entertainment. It seems that 'heart purity' has been placed on the back-burner as the church begins to estimate members for what they have, rather than what they are. How we worship our Lord is an indication of what we are, worship is always the by-product of our true spiritual nature, and accurately reflects what is in us.

CONFERENCES ON HOLINESS

with Matthew Skariah

September 13-18
Grace Baptist Church
Durant, Oklahoma
Anthony Williams, Pastor

October 5-11
First Baptist Church
of Wild Peach
Brazoria, Texas
John Brewer, Pastor

Conference Theme:

*"Holiness is not the way to Christ,
but Christ is the way to holiness."*

Next Issue . . .

A timely and provocative article entitled
"Audacious Deception"

In this article, Matthew Skariah explains how 'religious hucksterism' has entered into modern-day Christianity. He unmasks the present-day prosperity surrogates who wrap their 'strawberry cheesecake theology' in a cloak of materialism, by using clever metaphysics and New Age diatribe in order to beguile and bewitch the simple at heart.

Skariah writes with an incandescent passion for Christ and 'holy boldness,' and set a prophetic tone. He draws daily from the inexhaustible treasury of Jehovah God.