

FeedBack

My Turn

Unfortunately I cannot give a hearty amen to Harry R. Jackson's prescription for improving public education ("America's Education Crisis," October). Jackson seems to put the emphasis on improving the teachers.

As a former pastor and current high school teacher, I've found that almost all the teachers I've met know how to handle discipline problems. They also understand the culture of their geographic areas and know how to help kids master the basics. The problems lie primarily with students themselves and their families.

Teachers and school officials need students who will take individual responsibility for their education and parents who will establish education as a priority for their children. Students need to be taught deferred gratification. Parents need to eliminate the "part-time" jobs students work in order to pay for cars, car insurance and cell phones. Parents and students together need to establish study time, track assignments and monitor grades. Parents need to tell their kids that C's, D's and F's aren't acceptable.

Although teachers and schools can have some influence over students, they can't give them the values that must come from family and church.

Jonathan Massey
Chandler, Arizona

Good News From Ukraine

I am happy to hear about pastor Sunday Adelaja and the work of the Holy Spirit in Ukraine (“The Unlikely Ambassador” by Valerie G. Lowe, October). Adelaja’s ministry seems different from many of the ministries in the United States, where so much focus is placed on celebrity and money. No wonder God is moving in a miraculous way in that part of Europe.

Jamie T. Taylor

Boston, Massachusetts

I heard Sunday Adelaja speak when he was in the United States, and his message about impacting the culture brought me to tears. I am a Pentecostal pastor and want God to move in my church the way He is moving in the churches in Kiev.

J. D. Smith

Brooklyn, New York

Divorce in the Pulpit

I read your report on Randy and Paula White’s plans to divorce (News, October). If the pressures of ministry are affecting your marriage, then you leave the ministry—not the marriage. The body of Christ has a decision to make about supporting religious leaders who believe that life should go on without any consequences for their decisions. It’s time to take a stand for God’s Word and what He says about marriage.

Deedee Merando

Coos Bay, Oregon

It’s getting to the point where it’s easier to say who is married than who is not. We’ve made our ministers celebrities, and many believe the hype. Randy and Paula White said they

“grew apart.” What about Matthew 5:32, which warns about the sin of divorce? Does this verse not apply to people in ministry? Except for incidents of sexual sin or physical abuse, there are no grounds for divorce. What kind of example are the Whites setting for others?

D. Ayannali

Albuquerque, New Mexico

I’ve been a Christian for more than 30 years. I’ve been taught that when you are in ministry and face family-crisis situations, such as a possible divorce, you step down and allow others to take over while the problem is solved. I do not feel the Whites should stay in ministry. I will not respect either of their ministries in light of this situation.

Ron Acord

Chillicothe, Ohio

I do not condemn Randy and Paula White for giving up on their marriage, but I am exasperated because they think they should remain in their lofty roles, preaching a message they refuse to adhere to and continuing to declare a gospel that doesn’t have the power to work in their own situation. That is shameful.

Francis P. Martin

Lafayette, Louisiana

Our hearts are heavy and broken after reading the news of Randy and Paula White’s divorce. It sounds as if they both are going to continue their ministries as usual. What’s worse is that it doesn’t seem as if they’re going to even take a break, let alone step down.

We do not believe that God approves or overlooks this kind of behavior. Examples like this make it more difficult for other

women who are in ministry. The saddest part of all is that this mars the name of Jesus. It could cause people to give up on God.

Donna, Louise and Nancy Warner
Mount Airy, North Carolina

The news about Randy and Paula White's divorce was sad. However, what I found especially disappointing was that it was reported quite matter-of-factly. There was no sense of remorse. God created marriage to be a lifetime commitment. He said He hates divorce. We are not here to judge, but we must be faithful to God's Word.

name withheld
Kansas City, Kansas

News of Randy and Paula White's divorce was a double shock. A few weeks ago, the ABC news show 20/20 exposed the personal wealth of many TV preachers. Does the Lord want us to finance multimillion-dollar homes, yachts and jets with the money He has blessed us with? We need the Holy Spirit to guide us.

Don Hebard
Lake Oswego, Oregon

Can prominent ministers who end up divorcing claim to be models of leadership in the body of Christ? How much less can they if they inevitably remarry after only a short "break"? If God hates divorce because of how it misrepresents Him, then how much more does remarriage frustrate and grieve Him, especially when the reasons are unbiblical.

Sean Brouillet
Charlotte, North Carolina

I always thought that there are only two biblical grounds for divorce: adultery and an unbelieving spouse. If there is

another reason divorce is allowed, please let me know. If not, it seems that Randy and Paula White are showing that it is OK to divorce outside the boundaries of God's Word.

Otto Roder

Grants Pass, Oregon

Spooky Speculations

I was appalled by what Mark A. Pearson taught in his article about ghosts ("The Truth About Haunted Houses," October). The theory that people who die without being "commended to God" might be trapped on earth is both illogical and unbiblical. Scripture clearly teaches that after death comes judgment (see Heb. 9:27).

Besides this, what is the assumption? That Buddhist, Muslim and Hindu funeral services "commend people to God," and the God of the Bible at that? If Christians are the only ones who can do this act, then most people who have died are still wandering the earth. That is ridiculous.

Finally, it is sad that Pearson recognizes his concept is not found in Scripture but says that as charismatics and Pentecostals we experience many things not found in the Bible. Evangelicals recognize that Scripture alone is the authority of our faith and practice. I am charismatic because charismatic faith and experience are clearly taught in Scripture. Obviously, believers practice things not found in Scripture in everyday life. But to say we can have any experience that does not line up with Scripture is dangerous.

Elisabeth Dyvig

Roanoke, Texas

Author's response: Elisabeth raises four points regarding my article. First, she cites Hebrews 9:27, which teaches that after death comes judgment. Does Scripture teach that judgment comes immediately after death or on the Last Day? If it comes on the Last Day, then there is a time between death and judgment about which we know very little.

Second, she suggests that if what I wrote is true, then most people who have died are still wandering the earth. This is not true. In some particular situations, especially if a death is somehow unresolved, a soul might be "trapped." Christian committal prayers (a funeral) are one proven way to bring healing and release.

Third, she states that for evangelical Christians Scripture alone is the authority of our faith and practice. Scripture is the chief authority, but there are many other authorities in the evangelical church (see Heb. 13:17 and similar passages).

Finally, she says having an experience that does not line up with Scripture is dangerous. But many experiences Christians have are not mentioned in Scripture. In those cases we need the gift of discernment and the wisdom of the church to help us understand which experiences are of God and which aren't.

Canon Mark A. Pearson
Plaistow, New Hampshire

Clarification: In our October news brief about the resolution of an indictment accusing evangelist Morris Cerullo of under-reporting taxes, we reported that Judge Roger T. Benitez dismissed the case because prosecutors did not correctly explain the criteria for determining if a minister's income is taxable. We failed to note that the judge said prosecutors' "misconduct" created doubt about whether the indictment should

have been brought at all. Benitez said clergy who get money after delivering a sermon face the same specter of tax prosecution, so prosecutors must carefully consider such cases lest they violate ministers' First Amendment rights.