

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Changing the Life of One Child

By Amanda Wynant
Answer Staff Writer

More than 30 years ago, John Trent, Ph.D., was working in a hospital psychiatric ward, finishing school and hearing heartbreaking stories from people each day. God opened his eyes to the common cry he heard from hurting people. Most of them were seeking a blessing that they didn't receive from their parents; a blessing they had spent their whole lives seeking.

The Blessing became the subject of Dr. Trent's dissertation and the title of a book he authored with Gary Smalley. Though the book was overtly Christian – based on the story of Jacob and Esau in Genesis – it found its way to the bookshelves of many secular therapists and practitioners. Throughout the years, Trent & Smalley sold over a million copies of the book.

Dr. Trent, now 59 and living in Arizona with his wife of 31 years, is still writing, speaking and teaching about the biblical concept of

The Blessing all over the world. Recently, in teaching a young families class at his church, Dr. Trent said, he realized "There is a whole new generation of parents – since the original book came out – who simply do not know about *The Blessing*." Trent recounts, "That's when Dr. Tony Wheeler and I flew up to *Focus on the Family* and asked for their help in joining with us to call one million people, 1,000 churches, and 100,000 emerging adults to take *The Blessing Challenge*." Tony Wheeler, Ph.D., and President of the Institute for The Blessing at Barclay College, says "They [Focus on the Family] were amazing! Their heart is to see families thrive and they see *The Blessing* message as part of the answer." Others were quick to join in. Among several ministries, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Tyndale House and B&H Publishers – all competitors - have come together to support the initiative.

According to Dr. Trent, *The Blessing Challenge* is a 7 year initiative that launched on August 25th. Individuals and churches sign up to learn about what *The Blessing* is in scripture, and then commit to give the blessing to their family first - and then to ONE child God has placed in their life who won't get the Blessing unless their family gives it to them. "So our slogan is, 'One Million People choosing to change the life of ONE child!'" There are plenty of online resources for those interested in being a part of the challenge at: www.theblessing.com. The website has instructions for writing out a blessing for a child or loved one, and links to a community of others who are committed to the concept of *The Blessing*. Dr. Wheeler says, "We want to help churches create cultures of blessing where individuals, couples, and parents are encouraged and shown how to move toward others to bless."

Dr. Wheeler, 46, and Dr. Trent, were both raised in single-parent homes. Wheeler was abandoned by his father when he was 7 years old. He says, "I had serious doubts as to whether I could be a good husband or father. My junior year of college, I was introduced to

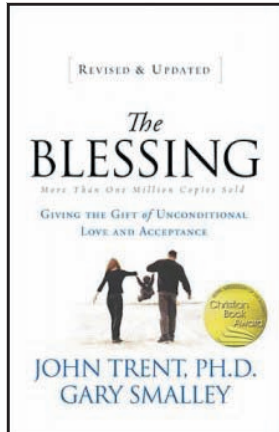
The Blessing and I was instantly given an understanding of what was missing in my life and a road map for connecting with, and blessing my wife and children." Wheeler has been married 24 years and has three children.

Dr. Trent shared a similar story of paternal abandonment. On the subject of not receiving a blessing from his father, he says, "I realized my father had never received the blessing from

his father. He was just failing to pass down what his father failed to give to him. The concept of the Blessing not only helped me in my relationship with my own father, but in my marriage, and when the Lord gave us children, in making sure they got our blessing as well."

Wheeler says, "How we treat other people boils down to how we see other people. If we truly want to walk in the steps of Jesus Christ we must acknowledge the people around us by lovingly touching them, speaking encouraging and kind words, and believing that they are loved by God and have a special future."

"And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, 'Bless me, even me also, O my father.'" *Genesis 27:34*



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HAPPENINGS

Fulfilling the Great Commission through Shoe Box Gifts

Special to The Answer

In Jesus' closing words of the book of Matthew, He instructs His disciples to go and "make disciples of all the nations". As you or your church endeavors to fulfill this "Great Commission", we would like to invite you to participate in Operation Christmas Child, a unique ministry organized by Samaritan's Purse that delivers gift-filled shoe boxes to hurting children around the world. This simple, hands-on mission project gives you or your entire church family, especially children, a tangible way to demonstrate the true meaning of Christmas – God's gift of His Son, Jesus Christ. In addition, Operation Christmas Child allows you or your church to minister across denominational barriers with thousands of other people, businesses and churches enabling national churches to reach the poor in their countries with hope, love, and the Gospel.

Participating in Operation Christmas Child is simple, yet incredibly powerful in bringing the Good News of Jesus Christ across the globe. In 2010, due to the collective efforts of thousands of individuals, churches, schools, and other organizations, over 14,000 shoe box gifts were collected in Southern Nevada and sent to China, Nepal, Indonesia, Mongolia, The Philippines and Panama as a tool to introduce children between the ages of 2-14 to Christ. Within the United States, over 5.5 million gift-filled shoe boxes were collected, and distributed to boys and girls in more than 100 countries through the international Operation Christmas Child outreach ministry.

How do you pack a shoe box gift for Operation Christmas Child? Very easily! Kids and families pack empty shoe boxes with simple items most people take for granted, including hygiene items, small toys, school supplies and hard candy.

Some of the most favorite items children receive in their shoe boxes are toothbrush, toothpaste, pencils and stuffed animals. The children also enjoy notes of encouragement from and photos of their shoe box packers.

Operation Christmas Child collects shoe box gifts during National Collection Week, November 14-21. There will be six shoe box drop-off locations in the Las Vegas area this year. To find the closest drop-off location nearest you, please call 800-353-5949 or visit www.samaritanspurse.org/occ. The Operation Christmas Child web site also offers detailed information, videos and support materials.

There is a Las Vegas Area Operation Christmas Child Volunteer Team to serve you in any way they can by answering questions, offering ideas and resources, or sharing information about this powerful global outreach with your group, business or church. On Saturday, October 1, they will be hosting an Operation Christmas Child Countdown Event at Warm Springs Baptist Church starting at 10 AM. This gathering will officially kickoff the Southern Nevada Operation Christmas Child season offering plenty of information, inspiration and supplies. All are welcome to attend to learn more about Operation Christmas Child. To RSVP or for more information about the Countdown Event, please contact the Las Vegas Area Operation Christmas Child Team at lasvegasocc@aol.com or 702-371-6000.

Will you, your business or group be a part of Operation Christmas Child this year? Above all, will you join us in prayer that God might use the shoe box gifts, Christian literature, and the local churches that facilitate the Operation Christmas Child project in many nations to bring children to faith in Jesus Christ?



A child sleeping with his box

Retirement

(Continued from Page 20)

of accomplishment. Visit www.aarp.org/money/credit-loans-debt/info-09-2010/controlling-debt-and-finances.html.

Step 9: Prepare For the Unexpected

Take time to consider how you'd pay for minor issues, like a roof leak, to serious ones, like a grave illness. Discuss the big issues with your family or those closest to you. Visit <http://www.aarp.org/decide>. Also check all your insurance policies to make sure they are adequate.

Step 10: Stick to Your Plan (Our Community Can Help)

Joining AARP's online community will connect you with others going through the same life changes. The community holds a wealth of information and can be a source of comfort and strength, www.aarp.org/online_community.

For more on retirement planning, visit www.aarp.org/readyforretirement.



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HAPPENINGS

Climbing Family Trees and Discovering Your Roots

By Trina Boice

Special to The Answer

Someone once said, "If you want to have spiritual experiences, do your genealogy." There is something magical and unusually compelling about genealogy. Unlike playing golf or doing crafts or participating in any other pastime, researching our family history is something sacred that calls to us. There is a special something that tugs at our heart and begs us to keep searching through dusty books and rolls of microfiche late into the night. You may be a professional genealogist or just a beginner trying to find a long lost cousin on the Internet. Your search may originate from curiosity, duty, or even religious dedication, but either way, you have felt that ancestral tug.

Don't know where to start? You're invited to attend the annual "Las Vegas Family History Jambooree" on Saturday, September 24th from 8:00 am - 3:30 pm. The event is free, including the yummy lunch, prizes, handouts, and resource material! You'll find it hard to choose between a variety of classes and workshops each hour. Stay all day or drop in when you can. To see the day's hourly topics and to register, go to: www.fhcopenhouse.org Everyone is welcome!

The search for one's roots became an increasingly popular hobby, thanks to Alex Haley's Pulitzer Prize winning book and 1975 TV mini-series "Roots," which fascinated viewers as they watched the story of a family unfold from the shores of Africa to the slave plantations in America. Alex Haley explained it well when he said, "In all of us there is a hunger, marrow deep, to know our heritage - to know who we are and where we have come from. Without this enriching knowledge, there is a hollow yearning. No matter what our attainments in this life, there is still a vacuum, an emptiness, and the most disquieting loneliness." (What Root's Means to Me," Readers Digest, May 1977). People want to know where they come from and feel like they are connected with something bigger than themselves.

As we listen to the voices whispering in the leaves of our family tree, we can hear the secrets to our own lives. They are the whispers of our ancestors who have paved the way for us. They often reveal us to ourselves. Have you ever wondered if one of your ancestors was a famous, important person? Perhaps

your last name is Washington, and you've always fancied yourself as a distant relative of the heroic father of our country. If you've shown a flair for painting or writing, maybe you've wondered if your talent is really in your genes, coming from an ancestor with a name like Da Vinci or Shakespeare. By climbing your family tree you may discover fascinating and inspiring information about your roots and even yourself.

Genealogy (jen-ee-ahl'-uh-jee) is the science or study of family lineage or ancestry. John Garland Pollard defined genealogy as "tracing yourself back to people better than you are." It is as old as the Bible, which serves as the first written example of family history. Although some people think genealogy is just a "dead" subject, family history is the most popular hobby today in America, ranking above even traditional favorites such as football and baseball! The first day that the enormous database of worldwide family records became available on www.familysearch.org it received over one million hits, more traffic than any other web site in history. Any pastime claiming to be more popular than baseball may sound almost un-American, yet family history is at the core of patriotism. A love of country and personal heritage leads to one of the

most patriotic hobbies you could have: genealogy! Alex Haley wrote, "Each discovered United States family history becomes a newly revealed small piece of American history. Stated simply: a nation's history is only the selective histories of all of its people. It is only through an unfolding of the

people's histories that a nation's culture can be studied in its fullest meaning." (Ethnic Genealogy: A Research Guide, 1983)

As you begin the task of unraveling the mystery that is your origin, you will learn a great deal about the history of cultures and geography. This search for your roots will

take you through time, from exotic places both on paper and in your imagination, and will give you a greater sense of just exactly how you fit into this giant web of people and places that we call the history of mankind.

As you research your heritage, (See *Family Tree*, Page 32)

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HAPPENINGS

'YOU CAN'

By Jeataun Johnson
Special to The Answer



JEATAUN JOHNSON

*Hold on to your dreams
even though it seems
that they will never be.*

*If you have faith
they will come true someday.*

*Wondering where your future lies
what's inside that wants to shine through*

*A vision of rising to the top
not letting anyone stop
what's in front of you.*

*Success in everything you do
Giving up is not an option, it's just a clue.
To keep on striving till you reach the end
when it's all said and done you will win.*

*A dream that has been completed
Failure has been defeated.*

*You will stand up, arise
with a dream fulfilled and not denied*

*Who holds the answers to every question?
Who teaches us many of life's lessons?*

*Who keeps us humble and strong?
To live and learn and how to get along*

*A life of experience and suspense
but to live with a heart of prudence.*

Our desires will be given if we pray.

*Trust in the lord, He'll make a way
To open every avenue, to open every door
A dream broken never no more*

Family Tree

(Continued from Page 31)

you will see the role you and your family play in the country where you now reside, often learning of traditions and sacrifices ancestors have made to bring you there. It becomes a spiritual experience to discover how we are all part of one great whole. A sense of belonging develops that provides an anchor for you as you try to find your place in a world that is whizzing by.

So how could romping through cemeteries and turning pages in old, dog-eared books be fun, you ask? You many never understand it until you've tried it. If you're the kind of person who likes to "people-watch" at airports or other busy places because you think we humans are just so doggone entertaining, then you're going to love doing genealogy! Death is just part of the journey of the human experience. These statements on real death certificates demonstrate the humor even in death:

- "Died. Nothing serious."
- "Went to bed and woke up dead."
- "Died. Don't know why - never had a fatal illness before!"
- "Cause of death: an ax over the head. Precipitory cause: someone else's wife!"
- "He died for want of another breath."

Others are attracted to recording their family lineage for academia's sake. Tracing lines of lineage and ancestry is as ancient as the history of man. Lineages were originally shared orally from generation to generation and later societies began to write them down. Tribal lineage was recorded by the House of Israel in the Bible, as well as by the Greeks, Romans and Chinese cultures. Lists of hereditary kings were compiled by the ancient Sumerians, Babylonians, Egyptians, Indians and Asians. In

medieval Europe, landholders kept records of lineage to establish rights to land, property and rank. Attention to descent and rank was also demonstrated in coats of arms for many societies.

One of the original uses of genealogy was to prove that a person was descended from particular kings and queens in order to acquire certain benefits or level of status. Not surprisingly, until the 16th century, the science of genealogy was most often used by either rulers or upper class families. Extensive records began to be kept later, making it far easier for us ordinary citizens to trace our lineage. Today, anyone can research their history to find out if they meet qualifications for admittance into social organizations, such as the Sons of the American Revolution or even to find out if their heritage qualifies them for a certain college scholarship.

Still, others are intrigued by their genetic lineage, often as a result of questions such as why a red-headed daughter with freckles emerged in a family of all dark-haired boys. Are Great Aunt Althea's genes coming through or that elusive milk-man at work again? Tracing a particular genetic composition can be extremely helpful for someone who needs to know what medical problems may be lurking or to understand how to avoid certain health tendencies in their family such. Knowing Diabetes, Lupis, or high cholesterol, for example, run in your family can be a great motivator for improving healthy habits in younger generations.

Family history isn't just about searching for dead ancestors, but it's also about uniting living relatives and celebrating our families. To get started on the world's largest family history database online, go to www.new.familysearch.org.



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